

April 10, 2012

Dear Chairman Bulova, Budget Chairman Foust and Board Members:

I am Tania Hossain and I serve as the President of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. The Federation advocates on behalf civic associations to local, state and federal officials on various countywide issues while striving to offer viable solutions to community challenges. Currently, the Federation represents approximately 40,000 households located in Fairfax County.

Although, the worst of a challenging budget environment that began in FY09 is over, recovery remains slow with a modest growth in the county's revenue base. FY13 is described by county leaders as a fairly steady-state budget that preserves services and avoids major program or personnel cuts. It is my honor and privilege to offer for your consideration the Federation's recommendations on Fairfax County's FY13 Advertised Budget.

The county deserves praise for steering prudently through a time of extended fiscal challenge due to the ongoing economic slump. As the economy slowly improves, attention must turn to funding some county needs that have been underfunded in previous years. However, at a time when total real estate property values in Fairfax County continue to remain less than in FY00, and when many residents continue to feel financial distress, even the slight average increase on the real estate tax bill can become an undue burden on Fairfax County homeowners.

The Federation urges the Board to maintain to the real estate tax rate of \$1.07 per \$100 of assessed value. While this tax rate will trigger a slight increase in actual real estate dollar for the average homeowner, it will be a reduced amount as compared to the advertised \$1.08 per \$100 assessed value. In addition, the Federation supports an increase in the Stormwater fund tax rate by \$0.01 per \$100 of assessed valuation to \$0.025 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

In our complete testimony, submitted this afternoon to your offices via email, the Federation recommends restoring several programs we have concluded are essential and critical to a better quality of life for Fairfax County residents.

In addition, the Federation recommends the following highlights from our comprehensive resolutions package: that the County increase its transfer to Fairfax County Public School by an additional \$8M, resulting in a 5% increase over the proposed FY2013 transfer, instead of the proposed 4.5% increase; continue the implementation of Josiah H. Beeman Commission recommendations as new funds are identified to be used towards adequate staffing for community-based services; allocate the \$2M for pay adjustment for the Police Department; review the sustainable employee retirement plan options and do not add or increase retirement benefits while the pensions are underfunded; implement the two staffing positions for Tysons Urban Center transportation planning; and restore \$1M in funding to the libraries.

And finally, I would be remiss if I did not share the Federation's concern and recommendations on the following items: monitor the staff identified \$3B in potential transportation related unfunded mandates; ensure that all public-private funding partnerships are exhausted for the completion of the Rail to Dulles Project; and take precaution on future liabilities to county taxpayers before additional funding is approved for the Lorton Arts Center.

We ask that you review our full resolutions package and realize that we understand that the county's budget is a work in progress. We know that the budget is not merely numbers and that it represents your determination of the best management of priorities in service to county residents. The Federation will continue to contribute meaningfully in the county's budget process and our work is shared with all via our website – www.fairfaxfederation.org.

In closing, I would like to take this moment to thank the Federation membership and stakeholders for contributing to and the Federation's Budget Committee for leading our budget process. And last but not least, we have been fortunate to have had Tony Griffin join us for many years in robust and spirited budget discussions and will miss his presence during those long evening meetings. The Federation is appreciative to Tony for his exemplary work in managing Fairfax County and wishes him all the best with his future endeavors. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of Fairfax County residents.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania Hossain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tania Hossain, President
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association
4022 Hummer Road
Annandale, VA 22003
Phone: 703-489-5999
fedpres2012@fairfaxfederation.org