

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201

November 20, 2020

Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Request for development of a Deer Management Strategy

Dear Chair Garvey,

The Environmental and Energy Conservation Commission has been briefed by Arlington Master Naturalists about the problems of White-tailed Deer in Arlington and recommends that the County Board direct staff to develop a deer management strategy that will address the excessive deer browsing and overpopulation in the County, including:

- Conduct a census of the deer population, estimate costs to the County of over browsing, and establish a target population size that will protect ecosystem health in our natural areas and provide a healthy environment for the deer;
- Engage with neighboring jurisdictions to learn details of cost, organization, oversight, and public education strategies;
- Develop and initiate a public engagement strategy to inform and educate the public;
- Review current county ordinances that might restrict appropriate action to control deer population;
- Collect and publish comprehensive data on deer-vehicle collisions;
- Develop a pilot program in a limited area to gain experience with control procedures.

The current population of White-tailed Deer in Arlington is degrading the ecosystems of our natural areas, preventing natural regeneration of our urban forests, destroying habitat of birds, amphibians, and other wildlife, and undermining County efforts at natural area restoration. Deer help to spread invasive plants into our natural areas and are a vector for tick-borne disease. They are a nuisance to homeowners, browsing on tree saplings, shrubs, garden vegetables, and other landscape plants. Overpopulation increases the risk of deer-vehicle collisions. Deer are a prey species but in our urban environment have no natural predators to keep them in check. Deer management is the only solution to reducing and maintaining population levels that are healthy for our urban natural ecosystems and for the deer themselves.

Many surrounding jurisdictions, including Fairfax County, Montgomery County, Prince William County, and Prince George's County have established deer management programs that

Arlington can learn from. The program adopted by the National Park Service in Rock Creek Park in 2012 has resulted in a doubling of tree seedlings, a sign that such policies work. Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources has a [Deer Management Plan](#) and a number of programs and resources as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Bloom". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "B".

John Bloom
Chair, Climate Change, Energy and Environment Commission