

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201
November 16, 2015

The Honorable Mary Hughes Hynes, Chairwoman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
Re: Zero Waste Resolution

Dear Chairwoman Hynes,

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) received and reviewed the Zero Waste Resolution which directs staff, in cooperation with the community and the citizen-led Solid Waste Committee, to develop a Zero Waste Plan for Board consideration that explores all of the issues related to successful implementation of the objectives and goals contained therein. E2C2 raises the following points for your consideration:

Our Position: E2C2 supports adoption of the Zero Waste Resolution and supports initiation of a new, long term waste management planning process to explore the potential economic, environmental, and societal impacts of changes to Arlington's solid waste management programming.

Terminology: The term "Zero Waste" is used to describe a framework for decision making as it pertains to solid waste management. A cornerstone of the Zero Waste concept is the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Non-Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Hierarchy](#), which "ranks the various management strategies from most to least environmentally preferred. The hierarchy places emphasis on reducing, reusing, and recycling as key to sustainable materials management," providing tangible ways to divert solid waste from landfills and incineration. This framework, when informed by the analysis anticipated by this resolution and customized to Arlington County's unique situation, will help ensure consideration of pathways with optimal environmental benefits for Arlington (even if not ultimately selected) and the associated costs. To be clear, Zero Waste is an aspirational goal, and it does not require 100% waste diversion from landfill or incineration. In recognition of this the resolution includes a more practical 90% diversion goal.

Diversion from Landfill and Incineration: Further, E2C2 emphasizes the importance of the resolution goals as written. Arlington County currently utilizes the Alexandria Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facility but the environmentally preferred option, according to the EPA hierarchy, is to divert waste from both landfill *and* incineration. Before Arlington's contract expires in 2038 it would be prudent to have considered all options, including those that may reduce the County's reliance on disposal via WTE incineration over time.

Smart Use of Tax Resources: The Board adopted a Solid Waste Master Plan in 2004, and has already implemented nearly all objectives and surpassed the voluntary 2024 recycling goal of 47%. The

Board's history of leadership in solid waste management goal-setting, combined with the Solid Waste Bureau's (SWB) leadership in implementation, have established Arlington County as a leader in this arena. Now, new objectives and goals are required, and this resolution will commit County tax resources to evaluate options, inform public discourse, and provide the best odds of identifying pathways that balance the county's varied interests. Given the SWB's past performance and potential environmental benefits to Arlington County over time, adopting this resolution is a smart use of tax resources.

If adopted, E2C2 requests that the Board ensure the SWB has sufficient resources to conduct a thorough analysis and engage with the community. As with development of the Community Energy Plan, County leadership and staff engagement with the community over time will be critical to identifying appropriate intermediate goals that balance budget impacts with steady progress toward the environmental and social impacts envisioned in the resolution. E2C2 would continue to engage the SWB staff, contribute as members of the citizen-led Solid Waste Committee, and participate in other planning processes as necessary.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Dicke".

Scott Dicke

Chairman, E2C2