December 19, 2025

Honorable Takis Karantonis
Chair, Arlington County Board
Ellen M. Bozman Government Center
2100 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Commission Members

Caroline Haynes, Chair
Bob Benson
Bill Browning
John Carey
Elizabeth Gearin
Josh Handler
Noreen Hannigan
Jennifer Hazen
David Howell
Neal Hunter
Phil Klingelhofer
Lisa Marcellus
Alex Sanders
Stephen Sockwell

Re: Support for PRC letter on Invasive Species Funding

Dear Chair Karantonis,

The Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (FNRC) reviewed the November 18, 2025 Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) letter to the County Board recommending long-term funding for invasive species management. The FNRC supports the recommendations in the letter to both continue annual funding in the operating budget and importantly, also to use funding from the Capital Improvement Plan under the Natural Resiliency Program to address invasive species management and native planting projects over a longer time horizon.

As noted in the FNRC letter dated July 25, 2025, the Commission has long been concerned about the inadequate and inconsistent funding of the County's invasive species management program. Both the FNRC letter and the PRC letter highlight the need to identify Arlington's tree canopy, natural areas and biophilic spaces in the built environment as natural capital. Just as other investments need to be protected and managed, natural capital comprises long-term assets necessary for a healthy ecosystem and resilient community and likewise needs to be protected and managed.

The Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP, SD 4.5.1) specifically calls for pursuing "support of urban forestry and natural resources management through the Capital Improvement Plan", and (FNRP, SD 4.5.2) "identify activities that would benefit from longer-term consistent funding". The FNRP also notes: "Trees, natural areas, wildlife and plants are invaluable County capital assets and should be funded and planned for as such…Economic and social value multiplies as natural assets mature, and care must be taken to conserve the services they provide over their lifecycle." (FNRP, p. 121)

By disrupting ecosystem structure and function, invasive species also weaken the capacity of natural systems to adapt to climate change. Committed long-term management of invasive species is essential to restore healthy ecosystems that are more resilient to drought, floods and urban heat islands and that are much richer in wildlife and plant diversity.

As we noted in our July 25 letter, we are raising this issue now as staff begin internal deliberations on both the budget and the CIP for the coming fiscal year so that the County can take into

consideration the importance of building long-term sustainable funding for a robust and successful invasive species management program.

Sincerely,



Caroline Haynes, Chair
Forestry and Natural Resources Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

Attachments:
November 18, 2025 Park and Recreation Commission letter
July 25, 2025 Forestry and Natural Resources Commission letter