

Public Comment

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Good morning Chair Garvey, Members of the Board:

A new year-- and new members on the board -- make this a perfect time to bear down on resolutions and priorities.

I have a simple plea. Make addressing the climate crisis, which Congressman Beyer and others call the existential threat of our time, please make it your number one priority.

2023 marked the hottest since records were first kept in 1850. Impacts are accelerating.

Certainly, every resident has a part to play, for example by committing to the Rs -- refusing, recycling, reusing, repurposing and so on.

In the face of an existential threat, we also need leadership. Sure, LEED criteria for buildings, solar panels, planting shrubs on rooftops, measures like these help, and ... they aren't enough. We can't pave and build our way out of this crisis. We're losing natural resources and expanding impervious surfaces, turning Arlington ever-faster into a vast urban heat island.

What we don't need more of is aspirational plans packed with promises and no teeth. We need action. We need to know, day to day, how our leaders address climate change. What staff is

dedicated? What budget? Across which departments? What benchmarks? Timetables?

It's heartening the board will hold a meeting soon to envision Arlington in 2050. I return to the plea you make climate your top resolution today, every day. If you don't put it first, nothing else matters in the long run.

Please use your bully pulpit. And prioritize budgets, staff, programs that have teeth. Even in a bad budget year, how can we do otherwise than address climate change, which threatens each and every one of us?

Thank you.