

Council President Nancy Floreen and Councilmembers  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave.  
Rockville, MD 20850

May 4, 2016

Re: Expedited Bill 11-16, to amend the Water Quality Protection Charge

Dear Council President Floreen and Councilmembers,

We, the undersigned members of the Stormwater Partners Network, are watershed, civic, and environmental organizations who support a well-funded, effective stormwater management program in Montgomery County. Since 2006, the Stormwater Partners Network has worked with the Council, Department of Environmental Protection, Montgomery Parks, and other agencies to support clean water funding. The Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC) funds key programs, including the maintenance of a large inventory of stormwater facilities. These include stormwater ponds, and green infrastructure facilities such as rain gardens that capture and infiltrate runoff.

We write today to express our support for the elements of Bill 11-16 related to WQPC credits for facility maintenance. We also urge the County to maintain the existing higher WQPC credits for Environmental Site Design (ESD) facilities – devices like rain gardens and green roofs. Bill 11-16 would revise the County's framework for providing stormwater fee credits for stormwater management facilities on a given site. The bill would change the credit award (the fee reduction) from being dependent on the type of stormwater management facility, to now be based on the proportion of the volume of water treated by the storm water management system.

We support the change toward granting credit based on the proportion of volume of water treated, and also based on whether an owner performs structural maintenance. We also urge that you maintain (and not drop as Bill 11-16 proposes), the current approach of offering more credit – e.g. a greater fee reduction – to owners who adopt and maintain ESD practices, over and above the credits offered for conventional stormwater facilities (e.g. ponds). Granting higher fee credits to ESD facilities is based on two facts: 1) ESD practices capture and reduce runoff through infiltration and other means that promote improved stream health, not merely treat and release runoff; and 2) ESD practices often bring higher total benefits, such as increase in tree canopy cover, to the County and local community, when compared with conventional stormwater ponds.

Apart from our request to maintain the higher WQPC credits for ESD facilities, we support Bill 11-16, because it embodies three principles of sound stormwater program management and funding:

- (1) Stormwater management is a System – comprised of a large and diverse network of facilities.
- (2) Everyone must do their fair share, including paying into the WQPC, to support this system.
- (3) Ongoing inspection and maintenance of this system must be performed according to sound protocols.

Thank you for considering our views on this matter.

Ken Bawer  
Watts Branch Watershed Alliance  
Maryland Native Plant Society

Kit Gage  
Friends of Sligo Creek

Ginny Barnes  
West Montgomery County Citizens Association

Jennie Howland  
Muddy Branch Alliance

James Graham  
Neighbors of Northwest Branch