

Sully District Council of Citizens Associations



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Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee Resolution Expressing Opposition to the Proposed Abolition of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council and the Tree Commission

25 August 2026

WHEREAS the Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee, comprised of members of the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations and West Fairfax County Citizens Association (the “Joint Committee”) recognizes the paramount importance of the protection of the Occoquan Watershed and upholding Fairfax County’s environmental policies, as expressed in the adopted Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan; and as well as protection of residential neighborhoods from development impacts; including the growing impacts from data centers

WHEREAS the Quality of Life in Fairfax County has been significantly degraded in the last few years, despite this Board’s promotion of minor achievements as part of an Environmental Platform. Major issues include:

- By-right data centers, with no transparency of water or power use, huge impervious surface increases, and significant water, air, noise, and community Quality-of-Life pollution;
- Agritourism, with no modification of necessary supporting rules;
- Occoquan drinking-water quality (PFAS, salt, etc.) and quantity, and the protection of its headwaters;

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- The siltation of Lake Accotink;
- Secretive sale of County land;
- Antiquated airport modeling and resultant noise in homes that should not have been built;
- Continued development-favoring administrative decisions by timid or worn-down staff, ignoring or bending environmental rules to fulfill their mantra of “Get to Yes”; and
- Increasing impervious surfaces and rainfall intensity, with resulting stormwater runoff that stresses our inadequate existing stormwater utilities.

WHEREAS the above topics all effect tree canopy, wildlife habitat, ambient noise, heat islands, ground and surface water quality, air quality, traffic, infrastructure, and energy demand – these are all interrelated – and they are all within the purview of the boards proposed to be eliminated.

WHEREAS we citizens are suffering a death by a thousand cuts, with every poor decision creating snowballing negative effects – the damage to Quality of Life in the County is cumulative. And, worsening climate change will create additional exponential impacts that are unknowable today.

WHEREAS many decisions have been justified by ‘streamlining’, which often, in secret, prioritizes developers interests over we citizens and environmental quality. This approach conflicts with open, transparent and robust decision making. Conversely, well-staffed citizen advisory boards promote public participation, transparency, consensus building, and a full vetting of policy issues in a manner easily accessible to the general public.

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WHEREAS one of the principal qualities of good leadership is the willingness to select smart, experienced, caring people to help formulate sound policy and advise and challenge the leaders, particularly on complicated subjects. Good leaders are not afraid of smart advisors. What is required here is increased environmental stewardship, not less.

WHEREAS this County is blessed with a multitude of subject-matter experts who would gladly participate in an effective citizen program to improve environmental quality. A drastically neutered ‘Environmental Commission’, apparently reporting only to the Board of Supervisors, would take the county entirely in the wrong direction and repel qualified board members.

WHEREAS both EQAC and the Tree Commission have admirably served our county for over half a century each and continue to perform important functions in the local land-use decision making process. Yes, these entities can be significantly improved with more experienced expert appointees who themselves create an integrated environmental review and advisory structure.

WHEREAS the process for the elimination of these effective entities has been far from transparent, and extremely disorganized, to the extent that it is inappropriate to have a vote at this time.

WHEREAS the staff review of outmoded citizen Boards was tasked in early 2024. Since then, apparently no strategic planning regarding this matter has occurred. The proposed Bylaws are an embarrassment with their limitations. No competent person would create such as draft unless the only goal was to eliminate a board’s ability to function or provide challenging viewpoints to staff managers. They also will discourage any competent expert from wasting their time by serving on them.

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WHEREAS on 14 July, the Board voted to advertise the dissolution of these two advisory bodies and Chairman McKay expressed that the ‘new environmental commission’s’ responsibilities would be ‘fully fleshed out’ in time for today’s vote. Almost nothing has been done. It has been almost impossible for interested parties to learn anything about what is happening.

WHEREAS it is unacceptable that the County Environmental Committee has not placed the item on its agenda nor undertaken review of this proposal.

WHEREAS this BOS vote is, on purpose, timed for late August, the traditional last-vacation, ‘back-to-school’ time, when citizen awareness and engagement is at its lowest.

Now, therefore, in view of the foregoing, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

At the very least, this proposal should be deferred until such time as there is a completed comprehensive environmental plan to present to the public and ample time allowed for citizen engagement and comment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as Fairfax County citizens now comprise a voting base who are very attuned to protection of our natural resources and our Quality of Life, it is imperative that these two Environmental Boards must not be eliminated but improved, and the Comprehensive Plan must be updated to help safeguard our collective Quality of Life.

THEREFORE the Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee voted unanimously on 17 August to express its absolute OPPOSITION to the proposed dissolution of the Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC) and the Tree Commission, as well

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as the future plans to eliminate two additional citizen environmental boards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be communicated forthwith to the Fairfax County Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Board of Supervisors, as well as the General Assembly members for this area.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Joint Committee approved this resolution at its 17 August 2026 meeting:

Submitted by:

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Distribution:

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Note that this document is posted at:

http://www.sullydistrict.org/resolutions/2026082_JSDLU&TCResolution_AbolitionofEQACandTreeCommission.pdf