

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

WHEREAS the Joint Sully District Land Use and Transportation Committee, comprised of members of the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations (“SDCCA”) and West Fairfax County Citizens Association (“WFCCA”) (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; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee has reviewed the February 27, 2026 memorandum to the Board of Supervisors from the Office of the County Executive, proposing, inter alia, abolition of both the long established Environmental Quality Advisory Council (“EQAC”) and the long established Tree Commission, and the proposed consolidation of these two independent citizen advisory groups into a single, much smaller scale Environmental Commission. The Joint Committee wishes to express its strong opposition to this proposed action, prior to the August 25, 2026 vote by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee also shares many concerns expressed by other organizations, including those questions expressed in the correspondence from EQAC, Tree Commission, Citizens for Great Falls and others;

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

1. **The Joint Committee strongly opposes the Board of Supervisors abolishing EQAC and the Tree Commission.** The Joint Committee observes that citizen advisory boards historically have performed an important function in the local land use decision making process. The projected “streamlining” diminishes the opportunity for constructive comments and consideration of multiple viewpoints, including dissenting voices, especially in an era with

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increasing environmental impacts from data centers and other development. The Joint Committee believes that the Board of Supervisors should instead both welcome and encourage the provision of any and all constructive comments, and not further reduce citizen engagement. The elimination of two long existent and well respected citizen advisory boards, and consolidation into a smaller body with constrained membership, further reduces the independence of the existing advisory process, with the proposed smaller group more likely to be a rubber stamp than a consensus building process. Fairfax County's decision making process also benefits from multiple independent voices. EQAC has, over the decades, established a strong tradition of outreach to the community and promoting awareness of environmental policy concerns. Abolishing and consolidating the Tree Commission also likely downgrades the level of attention to the county's adopted tree save policy and related issues. The proposed annual savings of \$20,000 is vague at best, and the amount is miniscule compared to many other county expenditures of much higher costs which have likely less priority and far less impact.

2. **The Joint Committee opposes the proposed bylaws of the Environmental Commission.** The Joint Committee opposes in the strongest possible terms the proposed Environmental Commission bylaws, including the following, which seem calculated to minimize any potential dissent by the new commission to any and all land development proposals:
 - a. **Term limits:** The proposal for six-year term limits for members and three-year term limits for officers diminishes the opportunity for continuity of policies and reduces the opportunity for experienced citizens to contribute their perspectives. It may take years for a citizen to fully understand County operations, and develop insight.

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- b. Meeting prohibitions:** The limitations and prohibitions on meetings in certain months are also viewed as being unnecessary, and should be a matter determined only by the commission itself. The Joint Committee notes that the Board of Supervisors members are not term limited, and that the Board determines its own meeting schedule.
- c. Subcommittee limitations:** Likewise, the prohibition on the creation of more than two subcommittees within the larger Commission structure, and further limitation on committee meetings, only stifles the opportunity for the new Commission and its respective individual members to review and comment on anything. The Commission should be able to determine what subcommittees may be needed, and when they meet, without official prohibitions in advance.
- 3. The Joint Committee expresses its shared support for the questions raised by other concerned groups within Fairfax County.** The Joint Committee has reviewed the correspondence dated August 8, 2026 from Citizens for Great Falls, and joins in those objections to this proposal. The Joint Committee also has reviewed the detailed July 9, 2026 comments from EQAC on the proposed bylaws, and is in general agreement with those criticisms.
- 4. The Joint Committee supports increased transparency in Fairfax County decision making and strongly opposes any further restrictions to this process.** The Joint Committee supports increased transparency in decision making. Citizen advisory boards and commissions promote transparency, and a full vetting of policy issues. Abolishing two important and long established citizen advisory groups, in the name of “streamlining,” conflicts with an open, transparent and consensus building decision making process.

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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.