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[00:00:05] If I could take the receipt so we could get started, please. Welcome to the Environment Committee meeting.

[00:00:40] And we have usual steps, which is we've got the July 18, 2023 meeting summary that was given to everybody. I just wanted to see if anybody had any changes to that record. Hearing and seeing no changes, that will stand as the record of the meeting.

[00:00:58] And additionally, typically we ask if there's any updates that people had not received, follow-ons from the meeting itself. I'm not aware of any, and since I don't see and hear anybody raising that issue, then we will move on. So the first item that we're going to review today is the county response to bamboo ordinance on public lands.

[00:01:18] I appreciate the folks here. We weren't able to do this at our last meeting, even though it is a big deal, and a big deal in lots of different levels. I think, to some degree, having a little bit more time gave us a chance to maybe better fine-tune and essentially get a sense of what some of the impacts are going to be as to how we address this county ordinance.

[00:01:40] So I'm going to, I guess, turn to the committees out here. Jay, do you want to start with you? Okay. We'll start with Jay Cole. Your microphone, Jay, please. Thanks. I'm new here. Good afternoon, Jay

Cole, Fairfax County Park Authority.

[00:01:57] So we're here with an update on the county's response to the bamboo ordinance. It's going to seem a little late, as Supervisor Stork talked about. You guys had a packed schedule, and we were deferred in February, and then again, April.

[00:02:13] So when we talk about some of the things, we've handled a lot of the, as Supervisor Stork said, funding, carryover, acquisition. So it's still apropos, but we just wanted to point out that this was attempted earlier, when the ordinance was first created.

[00:02:29] Okay. So hopefully third time's the charm. We're here with FCPS, FMD, Code Compliance, and we're just talking about the global strategy for public lands for bamboo. It's a little different than the private sector. We're all very dedicated to eradicating bamboo as much as possible.

[00:02:49] It has severe ecological impacts on parkland and school sites and other things. So I'm going to, without further ado, I'm just going to. Thank you, Jay, and thank you all. Nice to be with you today. My name is Gabe Zakak.

[00:03:05] I'm the Director of Code Compliance and start with a little overview of the Running Bamboo Ordinance. As you guys know, the Code Amendment was passed and became effective on -- no, you're good. You're doing well. The Code Amendment was passed and became effective on January 1st.

[00:03:23] This was aimed to stop the spread of running bamboo into neighboring properties or to any public right-of-ways. It's our goal to work with landowners to gain voluntary compliance. If that is unachievable, there is a court option through progressive civil penalties, which are shown on the slide.

[00:03:43] In preparation for the implementation of the new ordinance, we collaborated on an outreach strategy which included the development of two websites. The first provided information on what invasive species are, how they can affect the environment, and what to do to prevent the spread. The second website was dedicated to running bamboo, which is available in multiple languages and provides a few different bamboo removal options to help folks choose which option works best for them on their property.

[00:04:09] We also have educational videos and podcasts available on bamboo. We also have bamboo identification mailers, which were developed to provide landowner with management options. And then lastly, we're going to begin work on creating a bamboo management webinar to be offered at a later date in the future.

[00:04:29] So the Department of Code Compliance's response is we're focused on working with landowners to obtain voluntary compliance. This occurs through site visits, communication, outreach, and education. All site conditions can differ, so we are flexible and work with landowners to identify by reasonable time frames for compliance.

[00:04:47] As mentioned, there are a few ways to remove or contain bamboo. We communicate these options to landowners so they can determine what bamboo mitigation strategy works best for them. And just to give you an idea of complaint volumes since inception on January 1st, we've received 164 running bamboo complaints.

[00:05:06] 66 of these have been found to be in violation, 58 or not, 10 are still open and under review, And ten, to round out the 164, were duplicate complaints. We've had seven appeals come through, and we

have two cases that are actually scheduled to go to court in November.

[00:05:24] On to the public land portion of the presentation. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Tom Fleetwood with the Department of Housing and Community Development. Very briefly, with respect to the FCRHA's properties, there is limited presence of bamboo on our properties.

[00:05:46] We do have some on the properties that are noted on the slide. we are working towards elimination remediation of the existing bamboo on those sites and we'll of course incorporate those indoor maintenance plans moving forward. Thank you. We're going to skip FCPS right now. Good afternoon. My name is Mike Lambert, Assistant Director for Facilities Management and with me is Jane Flanagan. FMD is responsible for managing the land owned by the

[00:06:23] Board of Supervisors. Most of the properties within the Board's inventory consist of large parcels of land with facilities on them or small isolated slivers of right-of-way scattered throughout the county. Consequently, FMD relies on its building engineers and landscapers to identify bamboo infestations at our facilities and responds to ad hoc field reports from the public and stormwater management staff about sightings of bamboo on county right of way.

[00:06:48] As you can see on this slide, FMD has identified removed and is currently treating 1.8 acres of bamboo across nine sites throughout the county. All nine sites are being monitored and spot treated as needed to ensure full eradication. Next slide, please. Here you can see the relative acreage managed by each of the county entities the park authority as you can see has the vast majority of the land holdings with about 24 000 acres or 75 percent of the total county inventory consequently the park authority faces the largest challenge in monitoring the for invasive species such as bamboo next line good afternoon chairman members of the board of supervisors environmental

[00:07:27] committee my name is john burke i'm the natural resources branch manager for fairfax county park Authority. The Fairfax County Park Authority aims to protect and enrich the quality of life for the community by preserving, enhancing parkland, natural resources, and cultural resources, as well as offering diverse recreational programs and facilities. Our mission, therefore, often encompasses environmental stewardship and conservation to ensure residents have access to well-maintained and enriching natural spaces for this reason management of bamboo an invasive plant

[00:08:06] that is severely impacting parkland from both an ecological and use-based perspective must be a priority since our initial identifications of bamboo running bamboo starting back in 2015 we've marked over 185 bamboo patches across FCPA properties.

[00:08:27] You can see those here on this map. This isn't just a scattered occurrence, as you'll note. It's a rather expansive challenge that has proliferated across vast stretches of our parks. So putting this into perspective, these bamboo patches cumulatively spread around 250 acres.

[00:08:50] And due to the magnitude of that space, as well as the intricacies involved in managing a plant that's known for its aggressive growth, often intersecting parkland and neighboring private property, this is going to be a long-term process to manage.

[00:09:07] The scope of the challenge of bamboo management on parkland emphasizes the pressing need for a comprehensive strategy, dedicated resources, and sustained funding. As we delve deeper into our approach and the challenge, keep this number in mind.

[00:09:28] It forms the foundation of our narrative when it comes to bamboo management on parkland. You'll also note, as part of this presentation, you have individual maps provided for your districts with the bamboo patches currently identified therein.

[00:09:46] Note that the parcels and the polygons that have been projected on those maps have been emphasized so they're more visible. They're not to scale. Next slide, please. Given the rapid spread of bamboo on parklands and the resources available to us, it's imperative that we strategically manage its removal.

[00:10:11] So to maximize the impact of our funding, we've formulated the Bamboo Project Prioritization Protocol, which aims to use the funding as efficiently and as impactfully as possible by considering several key factors. These include site conditions.

[00:10:27] Some sites are more vulnerable or prone to bamboo invasiveness than others. Ease of access. Accessibility can greatly influence the speed and efficiency of bamboo removal efforts. The size of the bamboo coverage. Larger clusters might need different strategies compared to smaller patches. For example, managing waste generated by larger clusters or larger diameter bamboo comes with additional coordination and cost. Proximity to rare resources. Protecting our valuable ecosystems and biodiversity is a priority. So, sites closer to these resources

[00:11:06] might need quicker interventions to protect high-quality contiguous or rare natural communities on parklands. Cooperation from neighboring landowners. The success of our efforts can be significantly bolstered with collaboration from adjacent landowners. Further, efforts to remove bamboo patches that cross to private boundaries will need to be coordinated somewhat with the private landowners in order to achieve total eradication of the particular bamboo plot.

[00:11:36] And then the Fairfax County Vulnerability Index, high and very high vulnerability index areas will also be considered when prioritizing site selection for bamboo projects. And there are also other relevant factors that we will consider. And while we've highlighted some of the major considerations, our protocol is adapted and might consider other factors as they arise.

[00:12:01] Additionally, educating the public remains a cornerstone of the strategy, so we will be actively distributing educational materials as we engage with landowners on our bamboo management process. It's also worth noting that we currently have a process in place to record and track any complaints or occurrences of bamboo on our property.

[00:12:23] And this will allow us to respond swiftly and adjust our strategies accordingly as new bamboo complaints are made. Next slide, please. Bamboo management is going to be a long-term issue.

[00:12:41] So moving forward, it's important to understand that it's not going to be a short-term project on parklands. We're looking at a prolonged commitment to protect our parks. Recognizing the magnitude of this issue, FCPA has actively sought dedicated funds, and we've made strides in this direction in the third quarter of FY23.

[00:13:02] We were awarded funding for contracted bamboo removal projects. This not only supports the direct efforts of management, but also may fund a dedicated ecologist position with a budget of $400,000. However, it's crucial to highlight that the ecologist position needed to manage this funding and serve as project manager for these efforts is currently on our proposed list of potential cuts to meet the 7% reduction threshold.

[00:13:30] So given the importance and long-term nature of bamboo management, as well as the involved nature of removing bamboo, holding this position could be detrimental to these impacts. In light of this awarded funding, however, I have met with my team with our primary invasive plant contractor to ensure that they are staffing up and gearing up for the large amount of work potentially coming their way.

[00:14:00] Bamboo Management isn't about maintaining the aesthetics of our parkland. And it's about preserving the ecosystem, supporting the biodiversity and ensuring the health of our species, of our, I'm sorry, excuse me, of our diverse wildlife species. There's a continued need for funding and support for this ordinance and parkland represents the biggest challenge simply due to scale.

[00:14:22] While we estimate very conservatively 15 years, $9.25 million to meaningly suppress bamboo patches to date, this does not account for potential bamboo patches that might be reported in the future or for market rate adjustments such as CPI.

[00:14:42] So thank you for your continued support. I want to thank John. He's home with COVID right now. I tried to get him to not call in, but he was scared I was going to mess it up, which is obviously valid.

[00:14:55] So, thank you so much. Again, a lot of that was a little bit of an old slide. We also received recently $400,000 in carryover dollars for bamboo, and as John had said, we were approved for a position in the FY24 budget, and I believe it's in the budget guidance to try and get the bamboo funding into the baseline.

[00:15:26] so we can continue. I think the crux of the strategy for the park authority as you see that's a very large number and it's not going to happen in one time. So one of this is to explain part of this presentation is to explain that we're going to go forward with a controlled strategy of the funding per year to get to that you know amount when we're finished. There's a lot of issues with access and neighbors and other things and it's just not prudent to just go in one time and and you know fix this issue it's going to be a very long-term

[00:16:00] project so with that any questions thank you very much Jay for the presentation do we we skipped over this the FCPS slides do you want to I know there doesn't appear to be anybody from FCPS here but just so the committee knows they were they had two slides in here that kind of give an overview of of what they identified their needs were.

[00:16:23] So I just wanted to make sure that folks were aware of that. It's obviously still nothing compared to what the parks have, but the point of this was to give you the big-picture overview, and I know that's one of our core roles is to set those broad agendas, and this is a good way of acknowledging and understanding that.

[00:16:43] So just the two slides there, just take a look at it. You should have it in your own materials. The second thing I would say is that the size of this is clearly huge. We recognize that they need guidance from all of us, as well as ultimately funding for how we're going to make that possible to get those changes and address those things, how to mitigate that going forward.

[00:17:08] There's a triage process. I think that was identified in the last slide. I appreciate kind of the methodology that would be used to do that. And I know others here may have some thoughts about that. I know that it was in the materials it's not presented because each of us should have their own district information that's and I know we've all looked at it it's a little bit more granular than the overall presentation was given and I think the value of that is to again to recognize how widespread the issue is

and how it's going to take a lot of effort over a longer period of time to get there and then the final thing that I would at least ask because I realize

[00:17:46] we don't need one more thing but There are other invasives, and in general, are we aware of any other invasives that have the same degree of impact that bamboo is likely to have on our parks, at least to start there?

[00:18:02] That could be an entire presentation. This is John Burke. Oh, go ahead, John. Oh, sorry. This is John Burke from Fairfax County Park Authority Natural Resources. There are other invasives that pose a similar risk as far as impact and scale.

[00:18:20] There's a number, but lesser celandine and microstegium grass are two that come to mind as having broad impacts and causing large areas of monocultures that outcompete native vegetation and are also exceedingly difficult to manage and control, but there are others as well.

[00:18:41] But we're happy for the ordinance on bamboo and our ability to respond to it, but yeah, there are other species that also pose a threat similar to bamboo. Thank you. And I will go to the chairman and then we'll start with just just two very quick questions.

[00:18:58] First, the first one of Mike, the one point eight eight total acres of bamboo that's been removed. We've assessed all of the properties that fall under your portfolio and that's it in its totality or there's another phase. Well, as I said, most of our properties are either huge in size or really small.

[00:19:16] So the ones that are huge in size, we have facilities on them and we monitor them and we haven't seen any of the seven hundred twenty eight. uh parcels in our inventory 400 have less than an acre so those are a lot harder to like right away old road residue um but as far as our major facilities we we have not identified any other bamboo anywhere okay good and my question for the park authority is you know recognizing this is a long-term piece and i think we understand that um the one thing i didn't hear clearly was the criteria for how you order the removal knowing that there's capacity issues with staff knowing

[00:19:53] that there's financial capacity issues or you can only get to so much of this per year. You mentioned some challenges with other property owners and some of the other elements. I'm just wondering if you have kind of a triage of how you decide what you do first and what can wait till later.

[00:20:10] Correct. So the number one thing that we're looking at is habitat impact. So if someplace has a very high habitat value, we would want to prioritize that. When we're talking about access with adjacent homeowners, I almost need a diagram, if we have 500 acres of parkland and the houses are right up against parks and it's all natural areas behind it, we would not drive through that high quality forest to get to the bamboo.

[00:20:43] We'd have to work through the property owners to go in from theirs. We also would need approval from everybody's property that abuts the bamboo because if somebody does not give us rights to eradicate the bamboo, it's not worth the money because that bamboo is just going to continue to move into it.

[00:21:01] So we would need sort of this triplicate of impact to the natural areas access to be able to get into it and approval from property owners. We have a lot of bamboo that's not necessarily super adjacent to property owners, but most of it is going to be run up against, you know, property owners.

[00:21:20] And one thing that I can guarantee is that Park Authority never planted bamboo. So it came either when we acquired it or from elsewhere. Again, all things being equal, we are going to be using the equity index to look at those places. There's a lot of areas where eradicating bamboo, especially in more urban areas and high equity areas, actually creates more parkland.

[00:21:41] And so looking at ways that we can, you know, create more space where there is limited space right now. The number that we have quoted is a very low number because it's due to our ecologists going out there and surveying our natural areas.

[00:21:57] They do not go out and survey where there are ball fields and soccer fields. So those are going to be added on in highly developed parks. We might be adding on small pockets of bamboo as well. Okay. And we're looking at the rate of the running too. I mean, obviously, if the running is happening at a high rate, I'm not sure what the technical term is, but the veracity of the bamboo is such that we can tell it's multiplying quicker in some areas than others.

[00:22:25] Is that part of the criteria? I just want to make sure we're making a dent here, but as we're doing it, the amount of growth that's occurring because we prioritize one site over another, I just want to make sure we're looking at that component. I just don't want a big magnitude problem of yours to just keep getting bigger.

[00:22:43] That's what I'm trying to get at. I think that we've never done something on the scope before. So I think that instead of promising, overpromising, I think it might be a good idea to come back after a year or so and report back to you all as to how we've made progress in doing that.

[00:23:01] One of the differences with us in other instances is the ordinance, and correct me if I'm wrong, is to stop the running. we would want to eradicate the bamboo. So for every site, we're going to take it a step further and get it out to save our natural area. So I think coming back and showing sort of what we have done with the initial investment of $400,000, how much we've been able to do.

[00:23:24] The other thing is it's going to go down in acreage because we're going to get those big ones first, and it's a scale situation. So going to those small pockets are going to cost more per acreage than the large pockets as well. So I think coming back in, you know, a year or a year and a half and telling you guys how we've done and hopefully your maps to all received will have shrunk.

[00:23:47] That's fair. Thank you. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go. Yes, Supervisor Waukesha. Thank you. So the final slide that notes the 15 years and $9.25 million for bamboo removal and suppression.

[00:24:10] I'm just trying to understand, and I recognize the 9.25 million is an estimate at this point. I want to ask a question about that. But is that to remove all the bamboo that's identified, or is part of the prioritization process looking at what needs to be removed and what needs to be suppressed?

[00:24:33] Hi, this is John Burke from the Natural Resources Branch. That number is a very conservative estimate based on the bamboo removal that we've done to date in natural areas, which will have, in many cases, a very different number than bamboo removal that you might expect in a landscaped environment.

[00:24:52] So we expect to be able to further refine that number as we take on more and more acreage of bamboo, and we are able to do that through larger economies of scale with our contractor. but we estimate based on the current amount of acreage times roughly $37,000 an acre for removal and suppression to hit

that number. However, again, that number is very conservative and will likely be refined as we get a better idea of what we can accomplish for a better price over time. Okay. So it is to remove every stalk, if that's the appropriate term, of running bamboo

[00:25:30] that you've identified, not just to suppress it, right? Because you could go in and put the barriers around it and not remove it, but this is the cost to remove it. Yeah, let me bridge the gap between ecologists. And I think when you're saying suppression, you mean stop the running.

[00:25:48] John's talking about suppression as in you have to treat bamboo multiple years. And so it's not just going out there the first time and removing it. You have to then go back to make sure it's gone. So that's what he is discussing. This is in the natural areas of going out there and removing it and suppressing it.

[00:26:03] The suppression, when you say suppression, you mean prevent it from returning after you've removed it. Correct. I don't think suppression is, maybe that's an ecologist's term. I don't think that's what suppression means, but that's good. I understand, and I appreciate the little bit of numbers in terms of how you got to 9.25.

[00:26:25] It sounds like you have an estimate per acre that's accurate as of today, and you just multiplied that out by how many acres we have. Correct. And suppression in a forested system is a lot different than suppression in a yard. If you have running bamboo going in your yard, you can do things. You can dig a big trench.

[00:26:40] You can put concrete and stop it from running. You can't do that in the forest. I mean, we could do it in a forest. That's my point. You have to remove it. Correct. Correct. Now, when we get to the numbers in more active areas, that might not be as much because maybe we can actually stop it from moving if it's not impacting, you know, the ecological situations next to a ball field, but those numbers we don't have right now.

[00:27:03] Okay. All right. I think that's going to be kind of an important point moving forward because I think we're going to start to hear from the community. If you make a decision to suppress bamboo in a certain park because it makes more sense, more cost-effective, we're going to have to explain that to the community because they're going to expect not to see bamboo.

[00:27:22] And for the, just, we would always prefer to eradicate it. Okay. If, in fact, where we would go, it would probably be a one, in my mind, it would be a one-step process. We would suppress it if it's about to go onto a private property, and it's so far down the line for our priority level that we're not going to be able to get to it.

[00:27:40] But I would always have it in my brain that at some point we're coming back and taking it out. Okay. All right. Thank you. Okay. Any other board members? I'm sorry, I didn't catch the numbers of how many complaints you've had, and I heard you say a couple of court cases.

[00:28:00] So I guess I'm curious about the numbers and how much that's changed since the ordinance. And then are you hearing from the public that they're having problems paying to eradicate the bamboo? Yes, ma'am. There is a total of 164 complaints, and about half of those are bound to be in violation.

[00:28:19] We've referred two of the cases that we just couldn't get the property owners to take any type of steps or to work with us at all. So they're scheduled for a court hearing in November. The second part of

your question was? Are you hearing from people that they don't have the resources to be able to get rid of the bamboo?

[00:28:38] Yes. We're hearing from that often. So we're trying to give them the different strategies as far as one of the cheaper options is to cut it down and apply herbicide. The digging it out and putting it in the metal trench is kind of expensive even for a small portion.

[00:28:57] So that's the route that most homeowners are choosing at this point. And so when you say expensive, have you heard from people what it's costing them to do this in their yard? I've heard people say $5,000, $10,000, $15,000, depending on how large their property is. One property that was 5 or 10 acres and was along the border.

[00:29:17] So they actually appealed because it was saying on the grounds of agricultural, but it wasn't valid. I mean, and we knew this was going to be some of the issues when we went down this road and that balance for people. Yeah. Something else we're hearing about is people don't necessarily know where their property line, there's a fence, so that's kind of difficult, too, for them to identify where their neighbor property is.

[00:29:40] We're doing the best we can, walking the properties, using gem aerial photography, things like that to try to identify boundaries and work with people. Thank you. Any other folks? I will wrap up with, we did a meeting, actually started Mount Vernon District, but it ended up being a countywide meeting that was very effective with respect to, is my oak dying or why is my oak tree dying?

[00:30:09] That had like, I don't know, a couple hundred people that were part of that. It was very, it was just an amazing response. I had no idea when we first went down that road. We would intend to do something similar. Probably, we talked about this as part of our prep. sometime late winter, early spring, to work with the community and do a county-wide virtual meeting that people can tune into that gives them good tools about how they can respond and, in turn, how they can let us know if they identify a county property that has running bamboo.

[00:30:39] And there are different kinds of bamboo. Not all of it is running, so that's one of the other challenges that goes with this. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[00:31:02] And the next item we have is Flood Mitigation Assistance Program to Increase Community Resiliency. Ellie Cotting has got a presentation for us on a new program that's made possible by the Appendix O Amendment, which was authorized on September 12th.

[00:31:23] But this is the first time that we are seeing the details of the new program. You also have a handout or a nip with more details on the program and associated procedures. And with that, Ellie, you ready to go? Yes, good afternoon. I'm Ellie Cotting, the Deputy Director for Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

[00:31:41] And with me are Joni Kalmbacher. Joni will be the Stormwater Planning Division Director, effective October 16th of this year, as Craig Currency enters retirement towards the end of the year. Also, Chad Crawford, the Director of the Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division. Mark Gorey with the County Attorney's Office.

[00:31:58] And Willie Wood with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, which I will now call the district for short. And so, as we've talked about, we recently amended Appendix O to establish

a local stormwater management fund. This fund has enabled us to give grants for things like erosion and sediment control, flood mitigation assistance, and stormwater facility maintenance assistance.

[00:32:25] And you all have previously recommended staff to move forward with the Stormwater Facility Assistance Fund, and we are here today to talk about a flood mitigation assistance fund. There could be future programs that would be brought back to the board should we see a need for them. So the reason for a cost-share program is because drainage is not straightforward.

[00:32:45] As you know, water tends to flow downhill. We have drainage coming off roadways and upstream properties, and they flow downhill and even through people's yards. And so, you know, who owns the drainage problem can be complicated. Also, we have streams that naturally move, and natural systems change over time, and we are also seeing additional increased storms.

[00:33:08] So we're seeing unprecedented flooding that the county has not previously seen. And by establishing a cost-share program, we are allowing residents to be empowered to take action to mitigate that risk of the flooding. In addition, we have seen that the best flood risk reduction programs, including FEMA, include these types of cost-share programs.

[00:33:31] And so we are here today to seek your recommendation on allowing the county to provide technical assistance through the district. and also allow the residents to move forward with projects while getting some level of reimbursement as well as the technical assistance. And the program is established to be very flexible.

[00:33:49] We don't dictate what storm or what practice would be put in place. It allows residents to be reimbursed up to $5,000 as part of a 50-50 cost share. It's open to both individual owners as well as common interest communities, things like places of worship, HOAs, property owners associations, multifamily establishments as well.

[00:34:12] And so the funding would be through the Stormwater Service District, and we are recommending $250,000 as the initial funding for FY25. And again, the district would be administering this grant program for us. So here is an example, here are some examples of some of the practices that are listed in the supplemental attachment that is posted on today's materials for this meeting. There are many additional practices that could be put in place, and in addition, if an owner wanted to do something that is not currently listed, we would consider that on a case-by-case basis. So this grant is

[00:34:48] also an important part of our Resilience Fairfax plan. It helps empower the residents, and the county can't do this alone in terms of achieving a meaningful level of flood risk reduction. So should you all recommend moving forward with this today, the next step would be staff would come back at a public hearing to request approval to sign the memorandum of understanding with the district that would establish how they will be administering the grant program. And then we would be incorporating it into our FY25 budget that you would see in the spring. And then we would start

[00:35:24] the program on July 1 of 2024. That concludes the presentation. Any questions? I'll start with Supervisor Palchuk. Thank you so much. Excellent program. And I'm trying to go through the fine details. I don't know if you have answers to some of those, but I'm seeing that overall the maximum is $5,000. So my two questions are number one. I assume that's going to vary between the multifamily or the single family or the size and scope. And then my second question is really what are you tapping into our efforts on outreach and support to help target communities and look at

[00:36:03] the equity lens. Yes. So in terms of the $5,000 current recommended ceiling, we have seen in looking at our regional programs around the region that the projects are coming in and varying between about $1,000 and $10,000. And so that's why the $5,000 would be the ceiling for that as the match. And then... Sorry, but to that, I guess it says $5,000. Does it vary between one home and like an apartment or a larger community yes and so it would just be the expense for that project whether it was for an individual residence or for a HOA or yeah or a group property it would

[00:36:42] just be based on what the expense of their project was and then in terms of equity we have taken on a community engagement work to engage with the community especially areas that are in the vulnerability index and have historically not approached us or are underrepresented in areas where we have gotten complaints. And I assume we're tapping into our non-profit network for that as well? Yes. Thank you. Chairman? Yeah, just following up on the last question, because I understand the district is going to administer this grant program, but the way in which it's

[00:37:20] administered and what we require of people will play a role in the equity piece. If we're going to require some engineered document or historic references to flooding incidents that have happened or an engineer's sign-off or a 40-page application, you're going to kill the equity part.

[00:37:43] And so I'm curious, especially given the cost of these projects. I mean, up to $10,000 is a lot of money, but on the other hand, you could pay an engineer probably that amount if we're going to require those types of things as part of the application process. So I don't know if we've given thought to, one, how someone establishes a history of potential flooding, if that's something that the county helps an applicant with or something they have to know to come forward, how we think about that in terms of the quality of the application and then whether or not we have to agree that what's being proposed will, in fact, reduce flooding on those properties

[00:38:19] and then assuming we have no liability for that beyond that point if that system fails or it turns out that there may have been a better alternative. And so help me understand a little bit how we're going to sort the applications and what we're going to require of people to be able to submit an application.

[00:38:36] So the program is designed to be on a first-come, first-served basis, and that would remove that judgment piece of who is at greater risk for flooding. It will be whoever is approaching us first. And the district has experience with this with the CAP and VCAP programs of going out and helping the owners understand what their options are in terms of what would be most effective.

[00:38:55] Included in the supplemental materials are the hold harmless agreement and the waiver associated with if you are accepting these funds, what that means in terms of future county participation and liability. But so the district will help them identify the type of project.

[00:39:13] That's the part I'm clueless on. So if the district goes out and does an evaluation of what the flood risks are, are they the ones that are recommending mitigation measures, or is a private landowner going to be consulting with a private contractor? There's a lot of companies that do drainage work in the county.

[00:39:30] Are we going to rely on their advice and recommendation? And so I'm going to go ahead and speak for the district, but Willie, of course, feel free to step in. Under our current program, when there's a private property issue and it's not a matter of public infrastructure, we do refer residents to the district. And the district goes out and performs a site visit and will even, you know, they describe the situation for

the owner and give the owner ideas of some remedies that could be done. And then it is up to the owner at some point, if it's simple enough. So let's say it was a sump pump battery backup. There is not much design associated with that. If it is a wholesale grading, then of course there would be design

[00:40:08] associated with that and the district would be clear about where they and where their technical assistance ends and then what the HOA or the property owner picks up. Okay and my last question is this is all related to flooding of structures or can this also be used for a homeowner who is potentially flooding a neighbor's yard to potentially help alleviate that problem or is this literal like insurance related flooding of structures and the applicant has to be the one that has the structure that's flooding. In other words, another property owner couldn't apply

[00:40:44] for this to help alleviate something upstream. That's right. Because of land rights, I could not apply for this to be on somebody else's yard. It would have to be the person, the owner has to be the one with the property rights applying for it. This is not restricted just to structural flooding. This is for any owner who would want to undertake a flood risk reduction measure. It could be for yard flooding or anything like that. Including if that owner wanted to alleviate a flooding situation on an adjacent property, not necessarily theirs, because we've seen cases where the work is done on one property and the beneficiary is the next property downstream.

[00:41:22] That's right. Okay. Thank you. Supervisor Falston, we'll just come this way. Thank you. I like the concept, but it just seems, and first of all, we're raising $100 million a year for the stormwater fee.

[00:41:43] We've got hundreds of millions of dollars that we haven't spent that's in the bank. I know it's a lot of its dedicated projects. It just seems like this is such a good idea to push money out, but it seems like we're thinking pretty small.

[00:42:01] I mean, $5,000 buys you absolutely nothing these days. I mean, you can't do anything. and my feeling is i keep bringing this up uh with craig and i'll bring up a few uh you know the people who are paying the fee are suffering out there i mean stormwater is just devastating all across the county and yet they don't see the the value of the fee because it's going into streams and it's going into dams and it's going in lots of things so this is an opportunity it seems to me to really invest in the community in terms of stormwater management,

[00:42:39] I would suggest larger numbers. $250,000 is nothing. $5,000 is insignificant in terms of what I bet you've never given me a quote less than $250,000 for anything I've asked you to do.

[00:42:58] Who's going to be able to do it for something for $10,000? So I want to see more, I want to see accomplish more with this and what we're going to be able to do at this level of funding. So part of the question today is, first and foremost, are we interested in proceeding with the program?

[00:43:17] And then probably the second part of that question is, is this where we want to be to start, or do we want to do something more? So please feel free to weigh in as part of this. It's a great program, and it's wonderful. I mean, it's desperately needed out there, desperately needed.

[00:43:33] Thank you. Supervisor Lusk? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question's on the, I guess, the battery sump pump backup. So during the derecho, my basement flooded, and I learned that the problem was the sump pump itself.

[00:43:51] So it had a little floater in it, and the floater failed, so then the water just came into the house. So I love this idea on the sump pump, but what are we doing about the actual battery backup, but what about the actual sump pump? Because in some cases, that's the problem.

[00:44:08] Do we intend to give some support in replacing, upgrading? Because I think there are, my sump pump now has a dual floater. And it allows for if the one floater fails, then you get the second one to back it up.

[00:44:26] And then it goes into the battery backup if we lose power, which, you know, there's several components to it. So I'm just trying to see if, do you anticipate doing anything with the actual sump pump as it relates to the design and the floater elements, as well as the battery backup?

[00:44:46] I'm actually not sure if that's listed in our current supplemental materials, and if it's not, we would add it for a future one. Certainly, any reasonable measure that someone would come to request this grant for, we would consider. And that is certainly a valid technology to have. It seems like it could help. And then just to the point that the chairman was asking, if someone applies, they make the application, the costs associated with the actual purchase of the equipment and the repair, are they included in what can be reimbursed? How do you structure the actual reimbursement? Yes, all valid expenses.

[00:45:24] So the program is set up to require receipts for all valid expenses, including materials, design and construction costs. Okay, so that does help a little. I mean, personally, I think this is necessary, and it's going to certainly be helpful, but to the point that Supervisor Faust made, I agree. I mean, this, if you go at 5,000, you're going to do 500, right? You're going to do 500 improvements across an entire county, so that won't really give you a lot when you think about, you know, 1.2 million people, so I think that that point is something we're definitely going

[00:45:57] have to grapple with and figure out but on its face i appreciate what you've brought forward i think this is a really good start and um i think it'll make a difference so thank you supervisor gross and by the way the administrative costs i think i asked this question before soil and water conservation board essentially this the dollars here are direct for direct support through residents and the administration of the program is that is there some fee or portion of that that soil water conservation? A portion of the $250,000 recommended would go towards administration of

[00:46:33] the program by the district. And historically, that's been about a 20% cost. It just depends on the projects that are coming in and complication of them. Thank you. If my math is right, it's about 50 properties, not 500. But the time to wait for an evaluation, I know through VCAP, it can be weeks, weeks and weeks and weeks for somebody from the district to come out and do the assessment.

[00:47:05] So I think starting small is the way to go because I think we need to build capacity. And we don't have that capacity right now, so let's not set ourselves up for failure. But my other question would be, is this something that would, if the house, if you sold the property, would there be a disclosure via real estate rules that this work has been done?

[00:47:37] I don't expect you to answer that right off the top of your head, but I think we need to know whether this falls into some sort of category where it needs to be disclosed in the real estate documents when you sell the property.

[00:47:56] I'd like to go ahead and answer if you don't mind. So for this particular program, there is a hold harmless agreement associated with it that does get recorded with land records, and so an owner would

see that upon purchase with a title search. In general, Virginia does not require disclosure of flood, and I personally think that would be a great thing if we could have that be done.

[00:48:16] Okay, thank you very much. That was my concern because there's a lot of things that don't get disclosed and aren't required to be disclosed, and yet it's a buyer beware. Okay, I think capacity is probably our biggest challenge on this. We really need to start small, not slow, but small, so that we can see what the real demand is going to be.

[00:48:41] And then after a year or so, see if we need to ramp it up. But I suspect that given the challenges of applying for a grant, especially for a lot of people who have never done any kind of application like that before, let's make it as simple as possible.

[00:49:01] I know that a couple of years ago, I learned we have a house in North Carolina at the beach, needed a new roof. And North Carolina, they had a grant program that almost completely covered the cost of replacing our roof. We had to count it as a, you know, on our taxes. But the application process was all online, and it was remarkably simple. So let's make sure that we do things simple, because I think we will get more buy-in. Because if people get frustrated, They're not going to use the program.

[00:49:37] Thanks. Thank you. Supervisor Gross. Supervisor Wackershaw? Yeah, just, I mean, to Supervisor Faust's point, I'm looking at the practices, approval list of practices, and it looks to me like most of them would be under the $5,000 or $10,000.

[00:49:55] Maybe a French drain system around a house in Drainsville might be more than $10,000. but I guess I am I mean my kind of fear here is because people across Fairfax County install French drain systems around their basements every day right because they've been dealing with you know heavy rain some water seeps into the basement a little bit of moisture around the around the foundation. I mean, people to be able to get basically $5,000 off of that, I think it's going

[00:50:35] to be a big deal for them. So we may run out of the $250,000 quickly, it might be an unlimited amount of money that I mean, there are probably millions and millions of dollars spent just on French strains and surface grading around home single family homes, just single family homes in Fairfax County every year. And for everyone to be eligible for $5,000 off is going to be pretty significant. I don't know that we could expand it. What's that? We could expand it to

[00:51:11] meet that demand, especially if those kind of like normal things that people are already doing are eligible. One question I have is what, so if someone has to apply before they've had the work done or they apply after they've had the work done and then get reimbursed i'm gonna i'm looking to willie to see if he knows off the top of his head but i'm i i think the way that we would approach this is that at any point if you come forward and you seek assistance from the district and they would come out and be able to validate that the um the project is is valid even if you

[00:51:50] already did it well i would say that if it has already been complete for a number of years that is not reasonable to be considered under this program. So anything that's prospective. Okay. I didn't see that in the guidelines, so we might want to just drill down on that because obviously you don't want people coming and saying, I did a French drain around my house five years ago, and now I need $5,000.

[00:52:17] So we've got to make sure that we have clarity. And as we're starting to talk to the community about this, I think we want to understand, you know, My sense is you need to come to us and apply before

the work is done. I think that makes the most sense rather than dealing with people trying to retroactively seek the money.

[00:52:34] It does make a lot of sense because our staff would be the one to recommend what we believe is the best practice that would address the situation you have. And then just related, the district has a grant program, existing grant program for water quality projects, right?

[00:52:54] then how much, isn't a maximum of like $1,500 for like a property owner? So as it is with this case, there's a series of practices that are being approved for the VCAP and the CAP programs. And so it varies, the amount varies if you're doing conservation landscaping as opposed to if you're doing infiltration trench.

[00:53:13] So there are set caps for those different practices. It ranges from like $2,500 to a lot more. Okay, so some are much more than even what we're talking about here. Okay, got it. All right, thank you. All right, thank you. Supervisor Smith.

[00:53:29] Thank you. How would you deal with it if somebody came to you and they wanted to do a couple of projects? Would it be based on the money, or are you really looking at you want to serve more constituents across the district? Can I ask for clarification?

[00:53:44] Yes. Do you mean one owner coming with multiple projects? Right. Right, so we would consider those together, not separate by a project, just per owner. Okay, so it would be that still limit of the $5,000. And so step-back big-picture funding, you talk about this being in the budget with the Stormwater District.

[00:54:05] At the tax rate we're currently at, there's the funding to add this program in with your other priorities of how this funding gets used? So to Supervisor Faust's point, I mean, if you look at our total project estimate, we have over $800 million worth of funding.

[00:54:22] And so the pace at which, excuse me, that was wishful thinking. We have $800 million worth of total project estimate, and so the rate at which we are able to accomplish those projects, both these individual ones through grants as well as the ones that we do ourselves, is based on staff and funding.

[00:54:39] Okay. I don't know if that answers your question. It's, you know, $250,000 is our recommended start. We think that that's a way to judiciously move into this. I think the time-limiting factor will be ability to get people through the grant process and not the dollars. In the meantime, we have our own county projects that we take on as well.

[00:54:58] Right, and I guess that's what I wanted, the big picture look. All the things you're planning to do are getting done at the same rate that we have for the tax. Thank you. Okay. Supervisor Valls, if you could give it short, please.

[00:55:15] No, I mean, I think this is a great program. It's a small bowl. It's 25 cents per resident of Fairfax County. The problem is much bigger than that. Projects in my district where we look at the residents and we say, that's your problem.

[00:55:35] It'll be stormwater drains that go through their property, but because we didn't get an easement or whatever, we're not responsible for maintaining it. They are, and it's carrying in the water for an entire community. If we want to limit it to this page, these little things, I'm okay with that.

[00:55:55] But my only point is, going forward, we should be thinking bigger in terms of stormwater management because it is a huge problem. And once we adopt this, then we'll be done with it, and we'll check it off and move on to the next thing.

[00:56:10] And I just think the problem deserves more commitment from the county, returning some of this stormwater management fee to the people who are being impacted. Thank you, Supervisor Palczuk.

[00:56:28] Yeah, I think to that, and sort of my concerns are, I think this is one tool, right, that we're creating for those funds, and this is not targeted. It really is to get it out there, get it to the residents, and hopefully support them in applying and reaching out. I guess on the other hand is as we continue to see some of these larger issues, bigger ones that we know we need to address, whether they're coming from multiple sites or one site or we're seeing that um are we will you be looking at the same time i guess at how we use

[00:57:03] the other funds maybe that are more um proactive on our end versus reactive to to residents coming to us right so the five-year cip includes 95 million dollars towards flood projects and so those are our projects so if we're seeing bigger projects or issues that we can't address but we know we should right and so if it's a county issue then we will move forward with a project on it this allows the people who have private drainage issues to take measures to protect themselves.

[00:57:33] Yeah, I think we're kind of talking that in between. So it might not necessarily be a county issue. But I think trying to understand whether over projects over time or trying to understand sometimes figuring out where flooding issues are coming from if they're in someone's property, but it was not their issue. And we're trying to understand that. So I think it's just understanding this is one small piece, that bigger piece, the $95 million, as we see issues or projects that maybe are not on county land, but we need to figure out what's causing them, and they're maybe causing issues to more than one home, how we address it. It seems like a separate issue.

[00:58:11] That's a good point. So we are planning to come back with our, DPWES will come back with our partners with OEEC and Department of Planning Development and Land Development Services early next year to talk about an updated countywide flood risk reduction policy. And so I think that's what you're referring to is looking prospectively beyond what we just have in projects but as a larger plan.

[00:58:31] Excellent. Thank you. Yes, very quick, please. I have tried in the past to get the county, the stormwater management funding to help people who have these issues on private property even though they're not their issues.

[00:58:48] It happens to belong to them because it's on their property. And I thought we couldn't use county money if it wasn't our responsibility to repair the stormwater drains and do this site work to deal with runoff from other sites onto a piece of private property.

[00:59:12] So are we getting around that by working with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water, or can we actually spend our money on improving or fixing problems on private property? I'm going to, Supervisor Faust, I'd like to get you a brief memo on that, and we can go through all the scenarios.

[00:59:33] Okay. A key part of that is, at least from my perspective, is using the Soil and Water Conservation District as a way of managing that. So we need to move on, and there is a resilient Fairfax that we've created, which ties into this, and I think Ellie did a nice job of saying where we're going.

[00:59:51] I think every single area of the county has issues with flooding and stormwater management that are much bigger than these individual things, but the whole cloth needs to be woven together, and that's really what we're going to be continuing to work on. So thank you, Ellie.

[01:00:07] Thank you all very much for your presentation. We're going to move on to the next one as quickly as we can. I want to welcome Matt Myers and Nealey Lobb. They're going to present on the Energy Conservation Assistance Grants Program Partnership, and this also is with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District.

[01:00:26] And they're going to a program similar to VCAP that helps to support our climate action goal implementation. And we're also going to review the Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation to administer this program. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Neely and Matt. And if you all can make it as quickly as possible, we may still be able to get our other agenda items in.

[01:00:52] Good afternoon. My name is Neely I'm a community specialist with the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. I'm joined by Matt Myers, a division manager and Willie Wood, executive director of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District here in Ford, referred to as the district.

[01:01:10] So, today's presentation will provide the Environmental Committee with an update on the Energy Conservation Assistance Program and our continued partnership with the district. The agenda will provide just a very brief overview of the climate action plans in Fairfax County and how the Energy Conservation Assistance Program supports that. Describe how the Energy Conservation Assistance Program supports implementation of these plans, but specific to the Climate Champions pilot with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions as one example.

[01:01:44] Background on the current or the existing Energy Conservation Assistance Program, and then to describe our next steps to provide a more financially sustainable program for energy efficiency projects in the county. Fairfax County has climate plans that both address the cause and the effects of climate change. On the cause side, we are doing our part in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The Community-Wide Energy and Climate Action Plan, or CCAP, addresses emissions generated within the community and identifies

[01:02:24] actions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The second emissions reduction plan is the operational energy strategy that focuses on county government buildings and operations with the goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. On the effect side is Resilient Fairfax, which is an integrated action plan to address the local impacts of climate change. Resilient Fairfax ensures that our infrastructure, public services, natural resources, and populations can better

[01:02:55] withstand climate hazards before, during, and after an event. So the Climate Champions Program is one of the CCAP programs that was presented to the Board of Supervisors in December of 2022. The Climate Champions Program supports and celebrates actions taken by the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Champions Nonprofit Pilot is an initiative with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, or FACS. FACS was an ideal candidate for this pilot as they had energy efficiency and renewable programs ready to go when CCAP was adopted.

[01:03:35] The Office of Environmental Energy Coordination, we are providing technical support, two facts to build this program called Solar Sanctuaries. Solar Sanctuaries is a program where a place of worship would become a community-serving facility providing support, services to residents before, during, and after emergency events.

[01:03:59] as a solar sanctuary, approving energy efficiency of the buildings to lower energy consumption and creating energy resilience through clean energy and battery storage. As we've been working with FACTS, we've identified a number of barriers that may prevent places of worship from taking climate action.

[01:04:19] These include costs for implementing actions as well as access to information. So to address the cost side, both FACS and the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination have been pursuing funding on long three fronts, through grant programs, as well as keeping up to date on the federal incentives and rebates that are offered through the Inflation Reduction Act.

[01:04:46] And the third arm of funding is local incentives. At the February 28th and July 18th Environmental Committee meeting, the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination shared plans to work with the district to expand the scope of the existing Energy Conservation Assistance Program to support community-based solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Addressing this cost barrier will help meet the milestone of the Climate Champions pilot program of having 10 places of worship engaged in an audit by December

[01:05:22] 2023 with implementation to follow in 2024. So what is the Energy Conservation Assistance Program? It has been a program running since fiscal year 2015 and a partnership between the county and the district. The Energy Conservation Program serves projects through a cost share reimbursement program to address water quality and energy efficiency programs. The district, similar to other conservation assistance programs, acts as the grant administrator while the county staff

[01:06:01] provides technical assistance. So funding has been provided through the county budget, specifically through the Environmental Improvement Project Fund since 2015 to the present. Startup funds were provided of $30,000 in fiscal year 2015 and $75,000 annually with the exception of fiscal year 21. So the current program provides a matching cost share grant for energy audits and energy efficiency projects. Currently, an applicant may receive 50% or up to $750

[01:06:36] for an energy audit and up to $5,000 or 50% for energy efficiency projects. They are also limited to one application per year. So moving forward, or actually just to recap what this program has accomplished to date, the assistance program has supported a number of projects to improve the energy efficiency of places of worship, homeowners associations, condominium associations throughout the county. The projects have included appliance upgrades, heating and

[01:07:10] cooling systems, lighting, weatherproofing, window replacements, and energy audits. As of September of 2023, $47,000 of these funds have been expended on energy efficiency projects. This has resulted in an investment of over $400,000 by places of worship, homeowners associations, or condominium associations. These upgrades, for example, provide annual savings of either $6,500 a year through these project upgrades or 30% total energy savings. So what we are looking to do in the coming year

[01:07:50] is to move forward with a memorandum of understanding with the Conservation District and the county to transition the Energy Conservation Program from a special project assistance through the Energy Improvement Program to a more sustainable cost-share program.

[01:08:08] The program will continue to operate as a partnership with the district where the district will serve as the grant administrator. The county will expand our role to better promote the program and have a larger programmatic role through website support as well as the application and providing promotional materials.

[01:08:32] Following the approval of this memorandum of understanding, a fund agreement will be established based on funds available in the approved fiscal year 24 budget for CCAP implementation. A total of $250,000 will be allocated for this program. The updated program will continue to support places of worship, homeowners associations, condominium associations, but will be expanded more broadly to community interest communities and other nonprofits that qualify.

[01:09:01] The amount of reimbursement grants or cost share will be updated to better reflect the types of projects and costs to take climate action. For an example, an eligible entity may apply for up to two projects in any given year with maximum reimbursement of fifteen thousand dollars. The type of projects will support energy audits, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and resilience. Additional incentives are provided to encourage energy audits as that really provides a road map for how to prioritize projects to reach your energy

[01:09:40] and climate action goals. We are also having additional incentives to communities that are historically underserved or are more vulnerable to climate impacts fax is actively working with places of worship in these communities as part of the climate champions project our office intends to focus outreach and engagement through our existing interagent interagency teams on community services that includes a multitude of organizations working in this realm our schedule so in july this past summer we actively were working with the office of the county's attorney's office

[01:10:18] and the district to draft the mou and the funding agreement on september 26 the memorandum of understanding was approved by the northern virginia soil and water conservation district board we are currently in the process of building up a web page and application to launch this new program which we hope to do in october following the board of supervisors approval of the mou at your October 10th meeting. As the program is implemented before the fiscal year 25 budget cycle

[01:10:52] begins, we will plan to evaluate the program and how receptive these new incentives were for qualifying organizations to take climate action and to look for new opportunities, perhaps expanding to businesses. So what we are looking for is to request the Board of Supervisors at the October 10th meeting to support and help and promote the energy conservation program and to authorize the director of the office of environmental and energy coordination to enter into an agreement with the district thank you thank you neely and thank you matt i just i felt important to bring

[01:11:30] this to the committee just so people were aware of what's was going to be coming to the board on next tuesday so if people have any questions about i just wanted to give everybody an opportunity to ask them now or obviously you can ask them again on tuesday but but just wanted to give you some background on this any anybody yes i'll just be just be very quick i'm just trying to understand um the increased reimbursement amounts so those they would be increased from the amounts that are on slide five or slide five the the new amounts uh side five with the existing amounts are seven

[01:12:08] hundred and fifty dollars for an audit and with an upper limit of five thousand dollars for projects Okay, so on October 10th, you're going to be coming to us with higher amounts? Correct. Okay, but we don't know what those are yet. I can share those, what we're proposed.

[01:12:26] We're proposing to increase the amount of an energy audit to $5,000 to better reflect the costs of energy audits for places of worship, for example. That can run into $10,000 to $15,000, $20,000, as well as increasing the maximum amount for any energy efficiency or renewable project to $10,000.

[01:12:48] So that is doubling the amount of the upgrade. And in both cases, it would be 50% up to $5,050. Right. And if you're qualifying and identified by the equity indices, you could receive a 75% reimbursement.

[01:13:04] Okay. I was just curious on slide four, it talks about 10 places of worship to commit to an energy audit. Are they coming to you? Do you have any idea who they're going to be and if they're going to be geographically spread around the county?

[01:13:25] Faith Alliance for Climate Solution is leading that engagement effort, given their relationship with the places of worship. And they are actively engaged in areas of greatest need. For example, there is a church in Annadale as well as Rising Hope Methodist Church as well.

[01:13:49] They have also been a part of a grant application as well. So Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions applied for a Building Up grant this past summer where they received 20 letters of support from places of worship, the majority of which were in Fairfax County.

[01:14:06] So we are hopeful that we will have those 10 places of worship that have completed an energy audit this year or will be as part of this grant program.

[01:14:22] So you'll share the names of the churches as you move forward? Is that part of the process? Reporting back to the Board of Supervisors, we can certainly do so. Thank you. Thank you. And I guess even just some kind of reporting from the Soil and Model Conservation District gives us a sense of how this is all fitting together, how the two pieces are fitting together.

[01:14:47] We can talk more about that later, but I want to move on to the last presentation. We're not going to get to the final presentation on green banks. You do have a nip on that, and we will get more out to you on that. But the final presentation is something I want to make sure that we introduce to the board.

[01:15:07] It's really more of a think piece or more of a maybe it's a push piece, I guess you could say. Push in terms of I am we are pushing you all to look to see how you can engage in your own offices to make a difference with resident climate action reporting and competition.

[01:15:26] So John's going to give us an update on some of the tools that we've been talking about and looking to try to create more champions as well as to get more leadership. We know each of the board offices has a different kind of role with their community, and while we have, obviously, similar kinds of roles, we're looking for you all, us all, to kind of create a little bit of friendly competition among ourselves as well as in the community, and John's going to cover that.

[01:15:52] Thank you, John. Thank you, Mr. Stork. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is John Morrill. I'm the Acting Director of the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. In the last meeting of this committee, OEEC summarized our latest material for outreach and engagement with the community on energy and climate action.

[01:16:18] In Supervisor Stork's continuing interest in broadening community activity, he wondered aloud whether a competition of sorts, perhaps between supervisor districts, might help raise the visibility of climate action. OEEC staff considered this challenge, and we have a plan to make it happen.

[01:16:37] When we do engage with the community, it can be difficult to establish cause and effect from outreach. For example, we may know that over 500 people have viewed our videos on going solar and using electric vehicles, but we don't know who they are or where they are or whether or not they took any action. Another aspect of a challenge or competition is where are we starting from?

[01:17:08] what is our baseline? This can be difficult to establish as energy data by individual customers, like many aspects of life, is held to high privacy standards. We have energy use data in the aggregate for the county, but we don't have much granularity by geography. For some specific items such as solar installations or electric vehicle registrations, we may be able to quantify them by zip code, but in both of those cases, we know the more affluent are much more likely to own those amenities, and therefore they aren't so useful or helpful in a competitive sense, although they do

[01:17:45] tell us where we need to focus greater efforts. We have heard repeatedly that one of the most effective motivators for people to act is to know their neighbors have taken action. In fact, the use of friendly competition, making something into a game, has been shown to work in many fields as a way to increase awareness and participation in an activity. There are web-based platforms that allow individuals to use checklists and even report their actual energy use data to compare themselves to others. Individuals can identify themselves by location safely and securely while

[01:18:24] protecting their privacy, yet be part of a larger group and be part of a friendly competition with other localities and affinity groups. This image is a sample of one landing page for one web application that was established specifically to allow that kind of engagement. In the middle of the page is a drop-down menu where the user can select the locality in which they live when they register and then get involved. As an example, I registered and completed my own profile, and this

[01:19:03] app calculated an estimate of my personal carbon footprint, including my transportation. It compares my household to the average in Northern Virginia and the U.S., as well as households in other countries. The application has recommendations and a checklist for actions to reduce household carbon footprint. Elsewhere within the application, the web platform allows for easy tracking of participation and activity between localities and also affinity groups. For example, on this

[01:19:38] one platform, there is an active faith community leaderboard in addition to a ranking of towns and cities. These platforms are relatively new, and so the numbers are a little modest. So as we move forward through the procurement process to enter an agreement with a vendor, we'll collaborate with the vendor to obtain data on participation and results on an aggregated basis by supervisor district, say using the census-designated places as a guide for people to identify their

[01:20:16] location. This will give us a sense of where community activity is strong and where it needs to be bolstered. The goal of this kind of approach is to generate community buzz surrounding personal climate action. Our office will work closely with other county agencies that engage our communities in our most vulnerable neighborhoods to ensure as broad participation as possible. All of this work complements our existing ongoing outreach and programming for energy efficiency, renewable energy, electrification, waste reduction, and more. And just at noon today, OEE staff met with

[01:20:56] the environmental aides of most supervisors to share some of this information, some of our resources, so that we can work together to get the word out and help drive participation.

[01:21:13] So we'll provide further news updates on this effort as we proceed this winter, and I welcome your questions. So part of the core of this is that CCAP will not be successful unless we find a way to broaden it, CCAP meaning meeting our climate action goals.

[01:21:31] We know for the county it's 2030, 2035, 2040 for waste, transportation, and buildings. but ours overall for for ccap is 2050 and we have a long way to go how do we get there what are the best ways of doing that this is trying to use you know the communal nature and really the competition among all of us to try to find what that is and to be honest i'm i've pushed down on this because i think if the board offices aren't willing to engage on this at some level then i don't see how the county overall will be successful so part of it is i'm i'm i'm wanting you all to take a

[01:22:11] look at this. I don't have to have an answer today. We don't have to have an answer today. But I think we need to know if this is something that people see could make some difference or value for all of us. So, Supervisor Smith. I know you see my skeptic face. Me? Yeah. I've only worked with you for 20 years. I know. Don't say that out loud. I don't see how this attracts people that aren't already the people that are interested in energy efficiency. And I think our big challenge is how

[01:22:44] we reach those people that are busy and have a couple jobs and don't have time. Do you have any idea what the cost of doing this would be? The cost we think will be very low. There's even a platform that is free, but we need to make sure that we, and in fact in the platform that's free, They do it by offering eco trinkets and so forth as prizes for strong participants.

[01:23:17] So it's a nominal, you know, under $20,000 as a platform. As to how we get those who aren't already predisposed, it's really a matter of trying to find something that can be a hook.

[01:23:42] And if it's a little, just something that, you know, might be newsworthy or, you know, neighbors talking with each other, that's the kind of thing that we need more, just more people talking about this to generate curiosity and activity.

[01:24:03] I'm skeptical. Just put your entrepreneurial hat on, Suvrez Alcorn. I'm in. Yeah, I think this is great. I think actually I like the idea of some sort of geographic designation.

[01:24:21] I'm not sure supervisor districts are the way the world thinks outside of this room. But otherwise, I also think there are a lot of high schoolers that would really be into this. And, you know, there's some clubs out there that could really engage. So I'd say let's give it a try.

[01:24:41] Thank you. Going down the row here, anybody else? I see some of us, Patrick's hand. Yes. Yeah, thank you. No, also super supportive. I think I was sold when I heard Sonia Sotomayor didn't like school until they started handing out gold stickers, and her competitive edge kicked in, and then she became a star student.

[01:25:01] So it might not work for everyone. I do think it's worth trying, especially because it's already a platform out there. It won't take a lot of work. Might as well try it. I do like that it was by community versus by magisterial district. I think that the more and more we do that placemaking around our communities and building that community feeling there I think would be helpful.

[01:25:21] And then if there are other ways, you know, that we see that it's effective or not or can support it with additional ways to congratulate and point out those who are doing great work, why not? It seems like a pretty low-hanging fruit for big goals that we have. So thank you.

[01:25:37] Anyone else? Okay. Well, thank you very much. We have the last item was just the green banks. You do have an update from the county executive. Take a look at that, and then we will be obviously following up on that to get additional information as needed.

[01:25:56] So thank you all very much. With that, the Environmental Committee meeting is over.