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[00:00:06] All right. Well, good morning and welcome to our first Environmental Committee meeting of 2026. I'm Supervisor Dalia Palczyk, delighted to be the new chair of the Environmental Committee.

[00:00:22] And I just want to definitely highlight that I get to be here with a strong foundation of having had some really, really excellent, committed and dedicated chairs to our Environmental Committee, including most recently now Congressman Walkinshaw and Diane Stork, and delighted to be here. Today is really just a kind of a recap of last year and the highlights that occurred last year, as well as looking at the year ahead, and then having our annual report from the Equat Committee. I see the chairman and many of them are here to present today.

[00:01:00] Before we get started, just want to ask those who were in attendance, a member of the committee last year, you should have received the notes in the last committee meeting, looking to see if there are any comments, questions, concerns.

[00:01:17] No. All right. Well, we're really, really delighted. Before I turn it over to John Morrill, the Director of the Office of Environmental and Energy, Office of Environment and Energy Conservation. We just really want to, I really want to thank him and his team for the highlights of last year and just remind us all that it really is, you know, joint partnership.

[00:01:39] His office, not too differently from the equity office, really is here to work with all of our agencies, especially our Department of Public Works. And I know I saw Chris Harrington here earlier, as well as transportation. We just finished the Transportation Committee.

[00:01:56] And as we know, the number one emitter of greenhouse gases is actually transportation. So the work that's done across the county that we control is critical, especially at a time when it may be more challenging to expect or count on some of the federal support that was there in the past.

[00:02:12] And to that, I know some of us have gotten some questions around the wastewater spillage. That is not something we are discussing today, but interestingly, because my team and I got a chance to tour the Nomenkul plant in October and just saw how impressive is some of the work that's being done in the county to ensure that we continue to have access to clean water.

[00:02:38] I have asked and we have included reviewing and ensuring that we look at both our clean water and the work done by Fairfax Water as well as the Department of Public Works and what we do that's often invisible when it's working well is the infrastructure that keeps our county moving that keeps our waste water moving and allows us to continue to have access to clean water here in Fairfax County which we absolutely should not take for granted so to that I will turn it over to John Morrill who's going to give us a little bit of some of the highlights from

[00:03:17] last year and looking at the initiatives for this coming year for 2026 I know I've had an opportunity to connect with most of you I think some of my colleagues we're still trying to find a good time to connect on your environmental goals and initiatives and so feel free to share some today or we can continue to discuss that as we have an opportunity to have a one-on-one meeting soon so now I will turn it over to Mr. Morrill. Thank you very much. Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Board of Supervisors. I'm John Morrill with the Office of Environmental and Energy

[00:03:52] Coordination. I'm happy to begin with a brief summary, a sample of environmental successes for Fairfax County in 2025. Last fall, our office launched the Energy Compass Program, advising residents with decisions to make their homes more efficient and comfortable with lower environmental burden. We continue to promote this program and are in touch with our neighboring jurisdictions to maximize collaboration and information sharing. Last November, I appeared before this body and described the difficulties we're having identifying suitable electric

[00:04:29] alternatives to many county vehicle types, but the Department of Vehicle Services continues to add more electric vehicles and fuel efficient vehicles when they are available and suitable to our agencies. Four more solar systems were installed and energized in 2025, including a large installation at the solid waste I-66 transfer station. The county now has 10 solar rooftops in operation, and another 10 are in the queue at various stages of design and construction.

[00:05:04] And DPWES Capital Facilities delivered three new LEED-certified projects for public use. The Green Business Partners Program had a strong year with 20 new members, bringing the total to over 70.

[00:05:22] And hundreds of new trees were added to the tree canopy by DPWES and the Park Authority. And the operation of the wastewater system culminating at the Nomenkoe Wastewater Water Recycling Plant continues to operate smoothly, helping protect the Chesapeake Bay.

[00:05:42] Transitioning to a handful of goals for calendar 2026, I want to emphasize that I'm mentioning a select few out of the very many important programs and projects underway by county staff across the

entire enterprise. OEEC is boosting promotion of our programs to help residents make positive changes in their homes and their lives, including the Energy Saving Energy Compass program, but also our Sustained Fairfax campaign, the Sustained Fairfax Challenge, which is an app. And we'll

[00:06:16] again partner with nonprofits to boost participation in group buying for rooftop solar. And that group buying effort also includes purchases of heat pumps. In the months ahead, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services will summarize the latest round of community input, new legislative authority, and provide management alternatives with trade-offs so the Board of Supervisors can make an informed choice for the future of solid waste management in Fairfax County.

[00:06:54] Also last November, staff briefed you on a draft revised chapter of the Public Facilities Manual focusing on resilient trees. That amendment continues to work its way through the process, and we expect it to appear before the Board of Supervisors for adoption this summer.

[00:07:13] These recommendations will help ensure the tree canopy is long-lasting in the face of our changing climate. Construction of the I-95 solar project, the landfill solar project, is about 90% complete with interconnection to the Dominion grid, the last remaining milestone to be completed.

[00:07:37] Bringing this project online and energizing it will be celebrated with a ribbon cutting later in the spring. This one system will produce more than twice as much electricity as the 10 rooftop systems we already have operating.

[00:07:54] Also, the county relies on Fairfax Water to deliver drinking water sourced from the Potomac River and the Occoquan Reservoir. The District of Columbia, which relies solely on water from the Potomac River provided by the aging Washington aqueduct, is particularly vulnerable, and an interruption in supply to D.C. would have major economic consequences for the county.

[00:08:21] Drought, salt, and contaminants of emerging concern like PFAS pose new risks to water supplies. In addition, the Norman Coal Water Recycling Plant provides an extraordinary service to county residents and the Chesapeake Bay by treating a large amount of the county's wastewater and by providing reclaimed water to offset demands on potable water supply.

[00:08:47] This committee will examine the risks to our regional freshwater supplies later this year, and the county will promote public appreciation of the Norman Coal Recycling Plant in October, in conjunction with the anniversary of the Clean Water Act.

[00:09:04] We have a new interdepartmental pilot to lower county building energy use and costs through a remote monitoring project. This approach will realize substantial savings at modest cost, and my colleague Kevin Smith will provide more details on this in the next presentation.

[00:09:26] And invasive species alter the health and good ecological functions provided by our native forests and riparian areas. Eliminating invasive species entirely is economically infeasible, but managing invasives through a strategic, coordinated, countywide approach could preserve the most critical ecological functions and provide a competitive advantage for our native plants.

[00:09:58] In partnership with Resources for the Future, a 501c3 nonprofit, the county is undertaking a multi-year study to understand the impacts and alternatives for managing invasive species on a county-wide basis.

[00:10:15] This work will help the county best allocate limited resources to do the most good for our forests. And with that, Madam Chair, I look forward to your discussion. Thank you very much, Mr. Morrill, and I meant to let my colleagues and the public know that the chairman will be joining us shortly.

[00:10:35] He had another commitment in the building and will be with us later in this meeting. I don't know if there are any questions or comments. Not seeing them in the future. You know, we'll make sure updates come more as a nip, but just wanted to make sure my colleagues were aware of the focus and the foci that are being proposed for this year.

[00:10:54] Yes, Supervisor Vice Chair Smith. Just a question. I can get an answer later about the Energy Compass program. I heard feedback from somebody that used that, and they felt like they didn't get a responsive answer. So we can talk offline about that, John.

[00:11:09] I'm just curious about the evaluation of a program and talking to constituents that use it to see if they feel like the information they got was helpful and supportive. Thank you. We're happy to follow up with you on that. Thank you. Question. Thank you. Yes, I do see Supervisors Jimenez and Bierman.

[00:11:28] Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And thank you, John, for the presentation. You mentioned RFF. That's great that you guys are working with them. Obviously, they're based out of Arlington, and a lot of their leadership is around here. Are you all looking at different other organizations or grantees moving forward like this year?

[00:11:47] Are you putting in grants for different projects, pilot programs, for example? Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez. We're always on the lookout for funding opportunities. With regard to RFF, are you speaking of grant opportunities specific to invasives or in general?

[00:12:10] Just in general. We're always on the lookout for opportunities to partner with others and to access other funding sources. I'm sure you've been keeping track. There's been a big infusion right now back into the environmental world, especially those who are giving out grants.

[00:12:28] Like right now, if you notice, tons of environmental organizations are hiring. All of the foundations are kind of back on track and able to start pushing money back out because for a while there was a big halt, right? They didn't know the future was unclear. They didn't know what was happening politically with the administration.

[00:12:44] But now I think things are finally in this specific issue area, kind of the dust has cleared a little bit and they're seeing money just moving around again. So right now it might be a good idea for Fairfax, if you have programs or pilot programs, to start looking into some of these foundations that are giving out money.

[00:13:00] For example, MacArthur is back out giving back into the United States because for a while they had stopped giving in the U.S. They were looking most at different parts of the world. But anyway, so just lots of opportunity. Hopefully we're taking advantage of some of that. Thank you so much, Supervisor Jimenez, and I appreciate that.

[00:13:18] I think one of the foci we're also going to look at is how do we engage and bring opportunities to the community. So if you have any others you want to share with John or with the team, please feel free to do that. I do have quite a bit of colleagues now, so we do have Supervisor Beerman, and I'm going to come back up to the front.

[00:13:35] What does it take to become a member of the Green Business Partners Program? Thank you, Supervisor Beerman. All it takes is interest. Our threshold is essentially any business that is either Fairfax-based or has a presence in Fairfax County and has either an interest in pursuing environmental sustainability or climate action, and then they can be recognized as a leader if they have achieved some distinctive

[00:14:14] uh, level of accomplishment already. So there are, there's, there's, um, we, we've kept the, the, there's no gatekeeping. It's simply, uh, businesses that are interested and enthusiastic in, in doing environmental sustainability. So what does the business, uh, get out of joining our green business partners program other than good press um well the visibility should not

[00:14:48] be discounted um the county has has provided spotlight videos on on a number of leading uh firms that have been going above and beyond in their efforts uh we also offer uh information educational opportunities uh we our networking events have proven to be um very well attended with with a great deal of enthusiasm so uh we find that the businesses are learning from each other and and um pursuing pursuing initiatives learning from each other that that can both improve their

[00:15:26] bottom line and also um uh lower their carbon footprint do you think that adding 20 new businesses in a year constitute success? Considering the modest beginning, yes.

[00:15:46] Of course, we would love to have hundreds of businesses participate, but the 20 that we have enrolled as either members, leaders, or allies all bring some value add to the program and we're encouraged to see their participation. So, Mr. Behrman, I want to make sure but keep moving forward. It looks like you have an interest in looking at how to improve.

[00:16:11] Yeah, one more point. I don't think 20 is success. I think we need to re-examine the program. What you just said to us was essentially that you think that we offer really strong things to businesses, information, also an ability to highlight the good stuff that businesses are doing, and yet not nearly enough are taking advantage of this program. In fact, there are probably businesses out there who are already doing good things, who would be easy signups in theory, but they don't know about the program. I think we need to do much, much better. And I

[00:16:48] kind of felt that way when we got an update on this program last year, but I don't think that that should be one of our environmental successes because I don't think it was. We really need to do a lot better. Thank you. Noted. Thank you, Mr. Beardman. I have Supervisor Alcorn followed by supervisor stork and lusk if anyone else has a comment uh maybe you can leave it for the next presentation thank you madam chair very quickly first of all thank you for the invasive species assessment i'm looking forward to that and then i just have a quick question on timing you mentioned the unified sanitation district and you know the the board adopted a resolution

[00:17:25] directing staff to have some public meetings and look at some alternatives and this actually might be a Chris Harrington question what's the timing on on that coming back to the board and I yeah I think it's a quick question yeah go ahead Chris Chris Harrington director of public works so we've processed all the results um and input from the two the private hauler forum and the uh HOA leadership forum and so we're preparing uh fairly comprehensive not in package memo it would be reviewed by the county executive's office so we're working on it immediately yes okay yes sir and we would certainly have conversation with with with you and the chairman's office consistent with kind of our previous work point.

[00:18:03] Thank you very much. Thank you. Supervisor Stork. Thank you, Madam Chair. And just a question on the invasive species. I think it's wonderful. I think the opportunity for people around the county to learn more about invasive species, it's clearly a board matter that I'm very proud of having brought forward, and we have that invasive species virtual meeting for the county.

[00:18:28] I think it's the 24th of March. So I just encourage everybody to tune in and benefit from it. The second thing is, and I know it's a huge challenge, and John, you and I have had a lot of conversations about this, is green business partners and how do we get more people engaged because that truly is how we're going to meet our countywide operational energy strategy goals.

[00:18:54] And, I mean, I concur 20 is not enough, and I don't have an answer, But I do have a concern that we have to figure out some other way to get people more involved. And I'm also deeply concerned that the numbers, the ratio, if you will, of members in the green business partners, of which are consultants versus actual, in my mind, actual businesses, employee people, and are large enough companies that they clearly could be viewed as true partners that can make a difference.

[00:19:30] I think that's the other thing to present. I know in the meetings that I went to in this and now several years ago, it was overwhelmingly, if you will, consultants and people that really – this was their particular focus, one- or two-person companies, if you will, and so looking for ways to do that.

[00:19:50] I think we have to find new ways to do that, and I'll end with the way that I think we need to do that, and I've said this, I think, for a long time. is we have to have a way to highlight who truly are green business companies and who maybe fall below that level of success.

[00:20:17] So particularly with our land use folks or for contractors, et cetera, we have a way of not picking and choosing but just identifying these contractors meet this particular five-star level of energy efficiency.

[00:20:34] And we rate them. They're like the golden five-star folks. And we're not saying anybody else is bad. We're just saying they do these things. We highlight, we encourage, we challenge, we really broadcast that information. I think that's how, that's one example.

[00:20:50] I think there are others, how we change some of this dynamic. And I think without changing that dynamic, we will absolutely positively fail. as a county, to achieve our 2050 goals for greenhouse gas reductions.

[00:21:07] And I'm going to talk a little bit more about the county's part of it when we get to the operational energy strategy implementation. Thank you. Thank you so much, Supervisor Stork. I do have Supervisor Lusk, and then we will move to the energy strategy, and I know some of you have additional comments. I do also recommend, again, I think we each have seen or have ideas about good programs or pilots that might work here, or we've seen elsewhere.

[00:21:30] And I do think this is a really good time to share those. I know that there are a few in South County of Nature Forward and Defensores de la Cuenca. And let's just find and help bring strategies that we do see do meet engagement goals and do help us work both with our community and with our business partners in a more productive, even more productive manner.

[00:21:53] So to that, Supervisor Lusk. Yep, very quickly, I'll say very supportive of the invasive species assessment and thinking about Huntley Meadows, we've gone out there multiple times trying to address

some of the issues there, and it is a very large land area to deal with invasives.

[00:22:09] Second, on the same slide, number six, I want to acknowledge the work that you've discussed here around reducing the county's energy costs, looking at the recommissioning of some of the facilities, and we'll make the point that in our district in Franconia, we've had the Richard Byrd Library, which has unfortunately had to be closed for an extended period because of its, how do I say, non-operational heating and cooling systems. And I think this effort that

[00:22:44] you're embarking will help us reduce energy costs, but it's also going to help us keep our systems operational. Maybe we'll detect that there are problems with them in advance of their total failure. So I see the value of that. And then last, I wanted to ask, I know we didn't address it here, but on the LEED and other certifications, the recommissioning of that in terms of looking at whether a building still meets its stated LEED or other certification level and what's

[00:23:19] maybe in, if there's anything you can share on that as well. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Lusk with a question. An interesting thing about LEED is it is a certification for how the building is delivered. There is an additional operation and maintenance LEED designation that the county has not yet pursued, but there are still other certifications like Energy Star rating and so forth. So right now we're focused on improving the universe of county buildings, which number

[00:23:58] over 200 easily. And it's a large task by itself. Thank you. I did fail to mention, obviously, facilities and maintenance. It's a huge component and one of the agencies that really oversees a lot of this work in partnership with John Moore's office. So to that, we will now move on to the next presentation and I know some of you couldn't get a chance to speak I'll go back and let you start next time but we do have Kevin Smith who is a division manager of energy programs who will be

[00:24:37] sharing the update and have a discussion around the operational energy strategy implementation and to that I know many of us are pretty excited to see the work and the work ahead on this. So Kevin, take it away. Thank you. And good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Board of Supervisors. I am Kevin Smith, a division manager for energy programs in the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. My primary role is to lead the implementation of the county's operational energy strategy. And so today I will be presenting on

[00:25:14] progress toward and soliciting feedback regarding the targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy. I'm here to report on recent successes implementing the operational energy strategy and later will pose two questions for discussion by the Board of Supervisors. As a reminder, the operational energy strategy adopted by the Board in 2021 set ambitious goals for energy carbon neutrality in our operations. By 2030, the county is targeting a 25% reduction in energy use

[00:25:48] portfolio-wide using fiscal year 2018 as the baseline, with 25 percent of electricity use coming from renewable sources. For new construction and major renovations, the OES targets include LEED Gold Certification, Net Zero Energy, and all-electric buildings. In calendar year 2025, OEEC worked with our partners in facilities management, libraries, the Park Authority, DPWS capital facilities, and DPWS solid waste divisions on a number of capital improvement

[00:26:24] projects emphasizing clean energy. Specifically, with our contractors, we completed energy retrofits at eight facilities. We also completed solar installations at four buildings, the new Fort Buffalo fire station in seven corners, the I-66 transfer station, the Monument Drive garage resulting in that becoming a

net zero building, and the Burke Lake Golf Clubhouse. In addition, recent completed projects at rec centers were recognized for excellence by state and national groups. Overall, the energy efficiency improvements and electricity provided by the sun on our

[00:27:03] facilities realized \$5 million in avoided utility costs for 2025. On our website, shown here and at the link provided, this allows staff and the public to view these projects in various stages of completion and can be identified by location.

[00:27:28] Much of our progress to date has been through capital reinvestments in our facilities, upgrading equipment, or adding solar. As shown in this graphic, these energy retrofits can be costly and complicated, but they do yield large energy savings. I am pleased to say that we've added a new tool in our energy saving toolbox.

[00:27:47] We have begun a pilot program, as John Morrill mentioned in the previous presentation, with a vendor providing monitoring-based commissioning, shown here at the bottom of this graphic. This approach is less costly and focuses on the day-to-day, hour-to-hour operation of buildings more than specific equipment efficiency.

[00:28:06] We are partnering with Facilities Management, the Park Authority, the Department of Information Technology, and the vendor to enable continuous monitoring of energy-using systems in these seven buildings. These buildings were chosen due to their energy use, age, complexity, and potential for energy savings.

[00:28:28] After a year of successful operation, we intend to expand the monitoring-based commissioning program more broadly across the county portfolio for additional savings. Shifting to renewable energy, we are mindful of the goal in the operational energy strategy to obtain 25% of our electricity from renewable energy sources in 2030 and fully half of our electricity from renewables in 2040.

[00:28:57] This chart shows in solid blue the amount of electricity we are now obtaining from rooftop solar and limited purchases of green power. The hashed blue shows the expected electricity from solar projects in designer construction, notably the large installation at the I-95 landfill in Lorton that will be operational for fiscal year 2027.

[00:29:21] However, the yellow bars show the expected gaps between the current plans for on-site solar and our renewable energy targets. The operational energy strategy is silent on the question of how do we count the electricity from renewable energy in the supply of power we get from Dominion Energy and the grid in general?

[00:29:43] Staff's original interpretation was limited to striving for renewables on county property. We certainly understand the virtues of this approach, but we are also mindful that it is technically and financially implausible to achieve that goal with on-site power alone.

[00:29:59] That is one reason we are investigating alternative options. One such option is the fact the electric grid has continued to get cleaner over the past decade, with coal generation falling and new renewable electricity generation rising.

[00:30:15] This chart shows in orange the portion of Dominion's electricity generation coming from renewable resources, primarily solar, but the massive offshore wind project off Virginia Beach will be

delivering power soon. If we include the portion of electricity delivered to us by Dominion that is generated by renewables, we would be closer to our goals.

[00:30:39] Staff recommend we include the renewable portion of power from Dominion to help satisfy our goal of renewable electricity use. Does the Board of Supervisors agree to this interpretation to meet the intent of the operational energy strategy? On another related vein, the OES calls for all new construction to achieve net zero energy. Capital Facilities has been diligent in designing very efficient buildings.

[00:31:08] I earlier mentioned the Monument Drive Garage, which is operating on a net zero energy basis, meaning the solar panels on the roof are sufficient to offset on an annual basis the energy consumed by the building for lighting, ventilation, and other equipment. However, some buildings are very complex and must use more electricity than what on-site solar can provide. For example, the Franconia Government Center and Kingstown Library Complex and the new Stormwater Wastewater Facility at Fred's Oak will both include significant solar installations, but it will be difficult for

[00:31:45] these buildings to achieve literal net zero energy. The staff proposal is to allocate renewable energy credits from the forthcoming I-95 landfill solar project to make up the difference between what the building requires and what the on-site solar will provide. The accounting will not detract from the operation or finances of the I-95 landfill project as the power will go to the power grid and Dominion will provide valuable credits to the county. But by designating a portion of renewable energy credits to these new efficient buildings, they will achieve their net zero goal and also

[00:32:24] their lead designations. Does the Board of Supervisors agree with this approach? Thank you for your time. I'd be happy to answer any questions and hear feedback on the questions I just posed to the Board. Thank you so much, Kevin, for sharing both the report and for having your specific questions for feedback. I do think that's one area where we as a Board and now is a new board with our new committee board member should absolutely consider understanding that there is the desire of where we hope to be then there's the reality and being able to be a

[00:32:59] little bit more flexible and especially to I would say celebrate the changes and improvements that are happening to the grid happening at the state level so that we are not in this alone right to me it really is about partnerships and looking what do we control and then where can we look beyond where we are I would say I'm open to it looking forward to hearing from from my colleagues I know where we're able to put our resources where we we can do more ourselves such as how do we engage more of our community how do we meet people where they are how do we think about how to reach

[00:33:35] our diverse constituents in different parts of the county and then learn right what I'm hoping this year is we learn from our own practices as well as from outside work that's happening that we can maybe look to adopt here. You know, we're not quite the leaders yet. I know I and I hope we can be in the environment field, but I think if we learn to adapt, I know one of our landowners here made the Empire State Building efficient and also was able to save funds in doing so several years ago. So where can we look at where the bang for the buck is, both at what we do with our own

[00:34:12] resources and what we encourage the outside community to do as well. So I will pause there and I will start with Supervisor Sizemore Heiser. Do you want to go first? Just very briefly, I had just a comment on the previous section around comments from my colleagues around businesses and how to get more businesses involved. You know, in terms of marketing and perhaps like a gamification of

incentivizing businesses to get involved right so you get a prize if you you are sign up or you get some free publicity from our public i mean there's some ways that you can

[00:34:48] incentivize and gamify right create some if you take a district and create a contest in the district of how many different businesses in mclean or not to pick on mclean or wherever it may be sign up and you have you can do incentives that aren't cost incentives you can gamify things and And that's something that's really popular, especially amongst millennials who are starting businesses, right?

[00:35:11] And they're used to that sort of incentivizing. It's something that's being done even in the education field is gamifying math to get students interested and engaged. So just a thought I had around, you know, it seems like it's an ongoing concern about getting more businesses signed up. Thank you, Supervisor Heiser. And it looks like we all have a lot of interest in that.

[00:35:29] I also, when I was in Richmond last week, saw that there's the Virginia Green Business. Curious how that's functioning, if it's any better or not. But let's look at other ways that we may be able to partner with our businesses. I'm looking around to see if there are any other comments or questions. All right, I'm going to start out this and this time because I have Supervisor Lusk, and I'll work my way back up.

[00:35:51] Okay, thank you. I just have one quick question. It's on slide number six, just trying to better understand the next steps for these buildings and maybe what you see as the timeline for improving the energy efficiency of those respective buildings.

[00:36:13] Thank you, Supervisor Lusk. We're actually kicking off the program this afternoon, meeting with the vendor and agency partners to talk about timelines. In general, it takes a few months on the IT side to get set up and then going into that continuous monitoring, always looking for energy improvements.

[00:36:35] Typically, that firm has seen 10% to 15% savings, as shown on the slide, in a year-over-year basis. And then another key is that by monitoring, you're actually maintaining those savings in perpetuity after that. So, yeah, after that first year, we intend to expand more broadly into the portfolio.

[00:36:58] Excellent. Thank you. Good question. I think I saw Supervisor Stork and Supervisor Herity and Smith. Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, a number of things, but I'll start with one of the things that I found very helpful in the past was that, and I looked for it, I didn't see it, and maybe it's me, I'm not necessarily good at finding stuff on our website, but we had previously in prior presentations at this committee, we had literally an operational energy strategy dashboard with individual elements.

[00:37:34] Is that still available because I haven't seen it? I think I particularly like that because it nailed down each of the individual elements of that and kind of gave you a red, yellow, green sense of where we are. Is that available, and is that something that I think you should send it out to the board so we all can see that if it wasn't previously done?

[00:37:56] Thank you, Supervisor Stork. Yes, that's still available. We actually just recently updated those progress bars and those pages on the dashboard for fiscal year 2025 for our operational energy strategy. So we'll follow up with you and your staff and direct you to those pages.

[00:38:13] I tried to search for it. Again, I'm not the most capable person, but I couldn't quickly find it over the last few minutes. We'll ask that all of those be shared out with us again. I think that's a good point. Yeah, send it out to everybody. I just want to make sure everybody knows where that is.

[00:38:30] It's on the strategic plan dashboard, so we'll send that out to you again. Well, there's two dashboards. There is another dashboard that's related to the strategic plan, but this was far more detailed than even that dashboard. I know, sir. Okay. Because I saw that one, but I didn't see the other. I know you're drumming your fingers.

[00:38:46] I'm good. I'm good, sir. I'm good. Vice Historic, I did ask Mr. Morrill, having received the guidance again, that at the committee meetings we don't want things that could just go in a nip, that we can have things around discussion. So I ask them to simplify what's being shared here.

[00:39:05] So I will ask them just to share it again electronically so we can see. I understand that. I would ask when that's done that the other elements of that be included with the e-mail that goes out so that we can also access that. That's really all I'm looking for. Yes, sir.

[00:39:20] We spent a lot of time. We spent years putting those things together. We spent thousands of our county's time and started doing that. I think it's an essential part of finding out where we're going and if we're going to be able to get there. The other thing is that you'd mentioned before about counting non-Favoris County renewable energy or not.

[00:39:38] And if you go back to the committee meetings, we had a lot of discussions about those elements. I think the issue is we want to do all the above. But the core of the conversation that the board had then as a historian of sorts was that it was important that we focus on what the county can do because we can't always depend upon what may happen in Richmond or what may happen elsewhere.

[00:40:00] So I know we're going to need all the above, if you will, but we wanted to make sure that the county did everything it possibly could do. And as we all know, we got off to a very slow start, particularly on the school side. I think we're making good progress now. I'm pleased with that kind of progress, but I think it's important that we stay focused on that.

[00:40:21] And then the last point, and I meant to mention this earlier on the highlights, is I think it's really important if we're going to do environmental highlights that we also have disappointing lights, if you will. And I won't call it that because, you know, we're working towards it.

[00:40:37] It just may not be quite as fast as we want, you know, or we see or the challenges are bigger. And so just sharing that with us and helping us understand maybe the ones that aren't going quite as quickly as you want. and what if anything we can do because in the end this board tasks county to get these things done and if these things are not getting done then we're looking for how and what could we do to get them done and what those costs were etc and then the board obviously would have another choice or choices about whether or not it would recommit to those or would back off of those so

[00:41:15] again thank you all very much thank you mr stork um those are excellent points and good recommendations. I have Supervisors Harity and then Smith, and if anyone else would like to speak, please let me know before we invite our EQAC committee up. Okay, questions and comments on slide 8 where you asked your question. Would those be purchased renewable credits, or that's just taking credit for what's on the grid?

[00:41:43] Thank you, Supervisor Harity. That would just be taking credit for the renewables already on the grid. Then absolutely we need to be doing that so we can make smart decisions otherwise. Appreciate that. Slide 9, you asked the question there about whether we apply renewable energy credits to net zero.

[00:42:07] I would agree that we should be doing that 100% for the same reasons. It'll help us get to lead whatever we're trying to get to without spending a whole lot of extra money. Slide 6, so these things have been around for a while.

[00:42:28] I know the school system got themselves all mixed up with these contracts. Is this a contract with an outside group that will come in and do it, and they get a percentage of the savings, or how are we implementing this?

[00:42:46] Thank you, Supervisor Herodoo. Yes, we have contracted with an outside vendor to provide managed services to identify energy saving opportunities. We pay them a fixed subscription fee based on the quantity of buildings and scope of service.

[00:43:02] They do not enjoy any of the savings. All the savings stay with the county. It's not a percentage-based. Yeah. If we go on back, somebody should go back, and I'm sure somebody has, look at the troubles the school systems had with that, and I can give you some names.

[00:43:19] But I think theirs was a percentage of savings, which is very difficult to do. So it sounds like you're not going that approach. So that's a good thing. I think that's a good thing. Finally, I've got a couple of questions on Compass and the maintenance costs in our new green buildings, but I'm going to hold those for a follow-up.

[00:43:43] No, that's helpful. Thank you. And then I will just ask, if you have questions, we'll ask that responses come to all of us. So we all have an opportunity. You have so many programs that you're working on. So for us to be able to understand what others are asking, and you're answering as well. All right, Supervisor Smith.

[00:44:00] Thank you. I agree with your suggestions on slides eight and nine. To me, one of the issues we've had with setting these goals a number of years ago, they sound really good, and then you get into the details of what's the cost, what's the benefit, how do we do this?

[00:44:19] and we have so many needs in this county that I expect staff to look at that balance and present that information to the board to know what we can achieve when because this isn't the only thing we have to achieve for people in the county and for the world and what we do and I would like to see a balanced approach and achieve things as we can. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Smith. I think that's a great place to end today's presentation. Thank you so much, Kevin Smith. Really appreciate your work, and we will ask John Morrill and yourself to follow up with the additional data and any answers to questions that you receive from us.

[00:44:59] Okay, to that, I know it might take a couple of minutes as our next committee presentation is really from EQAC, so I do ask that the chair and all of the members of EQAC, if you want to come join us, introduce yourselves.

[00:45:16] I know my representative is here today. She's fabulous. And make sure that we have Larry and Eric, but also all of our EQUAC representatives who are able to join us in person today. All right. To that, Larry, as you, speaking of history, you probably have the most history in this room over, Eric, on EQUAC and the work you do, because some of us are new to your role.

[00:45:50] I know that you have in your agenda the work you do, but also really explaining to us your priorities and how you work and respond to the county. But if you want to make sure all of you have a

chance to introduce yourselves, that would be very helpful.

[00:46:08] And then I'll let you take it away, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. As you said, I'm Larry Zaragoza. I'm representative from the Mount Vernon District and chair. So Eric. Eric Gofflerud, Vice Chair, at-large member, but proud to be represented by Walter Alcorn.

[00:46:31] I'm Ken Lanphier from the Hunter Mill District, and I am the content editor for the annual report. I hold people's feet to the fire to make sure that what they tell you has some backing. And I'm Kathy Elsegaff, Providence District Representative, also EQUAC member.

[00:46:51] I will say the best, but you know. So what I'd like to do today is similar to what we did last year, go through a general review of what EQAC has been doing, talk a little bit about what we plan on doing for the next year, specifically focus on our priorities, legislative priorities, proposed topics, and have some discussion.

[00:47:16] One of the things I might want to highlight is a couple years ago, Chairman McKay raised the question of the importance of coordinating on the policy plan review. So for the last two years, I think, we have been working with the Planning Commission and staff to participate in the environmental component of that.

[00:47:38] And sometimes there's environmental components in other areas, too. That has been a very rich experience and also it provided for a lot of coordination with other groups such as the tree commission and others. One of the things we've tried to do is build agreement as we go about doing this work and trying to see that we use similar language to others so that it doesn't appear that we have conflicts where there is none.

[00:48:05] I also might want to note that the annual report on the environment included 17 recommendations. nine are new. Four had been recommended four years or more. One of the things I wanted to highlight is that we were talking about the Green Business Partners program earlier today.

[00:48:24] Green Business Partners program was one of our concerns last year. And so after we had our discussion last year, I met with Director Morrill and we had a great discussion. From my perspective, They have significantly altered the way that program works and make it a lot more inviting for businesses to participate.

[00:48:47] And I have to say that I strongly agree with the comments that were offered by the board saying that if we can get businesses to engage, maybe we can get more done in terms of renewable energy and things that just make sense from the environmental perspective.

[00:49:03] I think a lot of times businesses want to do the right things. They just may not have the information. And we have offered to work with staff in any way we can to do that work. What I'd like to do now is focus on some of our priorities. One of our big priorities continues to be climate resilience.

[00:49:24] One of the things that we recognize is the federal government has taken away a lot of funding. That is unfortunate, and it's made it hard to continue things given all the budget constraints that you have. But EQAC asks that to the extent you can, maintain the good programs that you have, keep them going.

[00:49:43] And I know that's a hard ask, but I also expect you'll do what you can. Data centers. We continue to see data centers as a big issue for the county. And one of the things I think that's important is data centers have the ability to reduce their noise.

[00:50:00] They have the ability to bring in green energy. They have the ability to do a lot of things. And a big part of it is just figuring out what we want to ask them to do and then asking them. And a lot of times I think it's feasible to get them to do it. But that conversation of vision, I think, is needed.

[00:50:19] Smart growth. Smart growth is a particularly complicated issue. It involves transportation. It involves quality of life. It involves so many different things. One of the things that we're doing this year is focusing on smart growth to get a better handle on it so that we could hopefully provide both staff and you recommendations, hopefully, to improve the quality of life for residents of Fairfax County.

[00:50:44] And part of it, too, is building a vision for what the smart growth in Fairfax County look like. That can be different in other different areas. Zero waste. Zero waste is another priority. We think it's important to do what we can to reduce waste and have more recycling.

[00:51:03] Transportation, having more transit-oriented development, that's really a good thing. High density along these areas, I think there's a lot of success there. Heat islands and trees, I think that's another thing that many people resonate with. I also see that being very closely tied to the smart growth topic.

[00:51:23] For legislative priorities, we had several, again, data centers. In many cases, I think we lack, as a county, the ability to do the things that make sense. And I think we need more flexibility at the local level to do things, although some things are needed also at the state level.

[00:51:42] In particular, I don't think the state has a clear vision of data centers and what we can do to make sure that residents are not forced to pay higher utility bills because we have a bunch of data centers coming in. I'm not sure data centers intend that to happen either.

[00:52:01] Forever Chemicals. Forever Chemicals is a particularly difficult and complex issue. We hope that in our review of Forever Chemicals, we can see that we're going to have – that we can ban the Forever Chemicals, but banning them is just one piece of it.

[00:52:19] You also have Forever Chemicals being spread onto lands where they form a circle because they get into crops, and most of us here around this table have PFAS in our bodies. Organic waste composting is the great way to get rid of waste and use it for a constructive use single-use plastic band bag band right now These five cents. I think probably is not a sufficient incentive to move the needle to get people to change behavior building energy efficiency for years the county staff has

[00:52:57] Advocated for doing more in terms of building energy efficiency at a legislative level. I think that's needed I think they've always been right on that. I think that's also important solar energy continuing to support solar energy I know that there's a number of bills before the General Assembly this year that would hopefully do that Senator sir will they'll cruz it there. They're my Representatives, I know they're involved in those and I'm grateful for that I want to review some of the topics that we want to get into in 26 As I indicated we're going to continue with smart growth climate is going to continue to be a topic that we want to follow

[00:53:35] In particular, maybe even exploring some of the opportunities, maybe working with green business partners and county staff to see what can we do to continue to build on the good work that's already been started. Data centers. I think anything we can do to improve things with data centers so that we reduce the tension between the data centers and the adjoining residents.

[00:54:02] We'll continue to do recommendations on budget as we do every year, comprehensive plan update, legislative. We always make comments on the park authority because we think parks are very important to our quality of life. There's a number of things that we need to pay attention to on smart growth.

[00:54:20] And so EQAC is trying to educate themselves so that we're working from a common base of understanding as we go about exploring these issues and providing recommendations to you. Supervisor Chair Palachuk, one of the things that you said when we met with you is that we should be clear about our role and focus.

[00:54:43] And so there were three things that Kathy came up with about what our role and focus is that I think were obvious to me but may not be obvious to others. So we wrote them down. What should EQAC do? We should act as an independent advisor.

[00:54:59] We should promote coordination of environmental touch points, trying to make sure that people get more information and consistent information, and providing supporting community involvement on environmental matters. That can take place a lot of different ways.

[00:55:17] So one of the things we're going to do is try to clarify that a bit this year in maybe in our annual report, in our communications. And I think one of the important things is to be clear that we're not duplicating what staff does. What we're doing is we're trying to complement, support, and work with them.

[00:55:35] So the next page, I basically have a listing of our members. I personally think we have a great group of EQAC members, all dedicated. And I also think it's important to say thank you. So we have fabulous staff.

[00:55:54] Dr. Maggie Bistra, Kelly Zetler, Matt Myers, and of course, John. We are grateful to former supervisor, now Congressman Wackenshaw, and Andrea Lewis. Andrea was just absolutely wonderful.

[00:56:15] Ken Lamphere, he was our vice chair and editor at large last year, and Eric is now vice chair, but Ken is going to continue to be our editor. And of course, all of you supervisors, we are grateful to you.

[00:56:33] We basically are looking to contribute to help things along, to do what we can to make things run smoother, and we're always searching for ways to do that. I was talking with Director Harrington this morning about some of the issues, and I absolutely love the interactions that we have with people like Director Harrington and Director Morrow because it provides us an opportunity to not only be heard, but possibly contribute and help.

[00:57:05] And at this point, I think it's probably time for questions. As vice chair this year, one thing I learned is how much work the chair does, how much work Larry does. And facing some family medical issues, that's why I had to step down as vice chair, because I realized I couldn't carry that load.

[00:57:27] And I want to thank Larry for all he does to keep this thing together. Thank you, Ken. So with that, I guess we're up to questions. There we go. Well, I will second. I'll take that as a motion of thanking Larry for your work.

[00:57:46] Also, it's an entire year, and I very much appreciate that my new representative has really, Kathy, has stepped in, and I was going to say I love slide seven. I didn't even know that was yours. So I appreciate, you know, as you know, we have a lot of work, And the environmental movement, the

education piece, the engagement piece, the doing piece has grown in a lot of ways over the past decade since I was a kid growing up here.

[00:58:13] But I think there's also a lot of space there to coordinate to make sure that we have, like you said, everyone has so many right priorities and initiatives. And I want to be able to be out in the community and have someone tell me this is what Fairfax County is doing to become more environmentally friendly and greener.

[00:58:33] I want us to be able to understand it ourselves, right, so that we can communicate that message. And so rather than it being 10 or 20 of us, 1.2 million people know what the Fairfax County green initiatives are and why we do them and how we're going to all have a role in that.

[00:58:51] So that's my passion, that's what keeps me alive every morning of, okay, how do I do my piece, but also ensure that my daughter and everyone at her school and our community and beyond knows their role and why we do this, right, and what we're doing to move along, or where we have setbacks each year as we review that.

[00:59:12] So I very, number one, just before I turn to my colleagues, very much appreciate the work that you do and that you allow your new members to come in and really help you with new eyes maybe define and redefine, help us figure out how we integrate not just only different agencies as John Morrill's team does, but also our different constituent groups and all the people who care about the environment, maybe different portions of it, whether it's our trees, our smarter growth, our technology, transportation, energy use. So to me, I really think, to me, it's really valuable to understand

[00:59:51] the focus and the role as we go into each year. There's only so much we can do in a year, right? So we have our long-term strategies. What are we going to focus on, and what are you going to focus on for this year? So I appreciate that. My only question for you before I turn to the chairman is, I believe on slide six, you've ordered them in sort of your priorities. So can I assume that your top three are smart growth climate and data centers?

[01:00:18] Is that what you're saying in the slide? That's what I fully expect we're going to put the vast majority of our focus on this coming year. I'm also very cognizant of the fact that for data centers, we have an ordinance, we have things in place, and so I want to just recognize that we're not looking to undo everything.

[01:00:43] I'm just thinking maybe we could do more to improve compatibility. No, thank you. It's just helpful. I know you came to me with a full list. So I said, what are your top ones for this year? And so it's good to know that. I know smart growth for me having the most urban area is how do we look at how we continue to grow in a way that's both sustainable but meets the needs of our community as we move forward.

[01:01:08] So I want to thank you for that work. And I will turn it over to the chairman, and then I believe some of my colleagues have some comments as well. Yeah, I'll be brief. I just, you know, want to thank EQUAC for their work. It's always a great document for us. And I, you know, I appreciate that there are nine new recommendations out of the 17.

[01:01:28] And, you know, I think the fact that four have been recommended for four or more years speaks volumes to a lot of the progress that has been made. And I think sometimes we forget that. I do get people all the time that come up to me and say, hey, how's Fairfax doing this?

[01:01:44] Or we heard you're doing this. And I do think a good amount of our work has guided some of the legislative action in Richmond as well. And I think people expect that as the largest jurisdiction in Virginia to be a forward leader on these issues. And our board, of course, has partnered with you, EQUAC, and so many of the other organizations that you've been working with on some of these initiatives.

[01:02:05] And so I never want to lose sight of an opportunity to say we have had a lot of success in so many ways. And I will say I read it wrong, but I appreciate what you were saying about the plastic bag tax because, you know, when I first read it said it's insufficient to deter use.

[01:02:25] And then I was comparing that to the statistics we had that showed just how many fewer plastic bags are in circulation in the county. and that's another one of those where we got the authority from the county i mean from the state yes we implemented it to the fullest extent the state would allow us uh and we have seen a measured reduction in the amount of plastic bags in our community it is still insufficient to deter use entirely uh to your point but i do want to just mention that since that's been put in place not only have we raised revenue to support litter prevention but i think most importantly and i

[01:03:00] I see this this time of year mostly, you know, when the leaves are out of the trees and you go into some of our forested areas and just the number of plastic bags that we used to see in those areas this time of year is significantly lower now than it was just a few years ago.

[01:03:18] And I think it is because of things like the plastic bag tax. And so I want to pick on that one little thing, but I think it's an example of your advocacy, getting legislation in Richmond passed, and then us implementing it to the fullest extent possible.

[01:03:33] And I still think that, as you acknowledged, our data center plan, reflecting on the fact that we didn't even have any guidance, really, for data centers in this county before we implemented our holistic approach to those, It is definitely progress, and I think all of us are watching very closely when we meet in here on Friday afternoons and when we've been down to Richmond.

[01:03:56] We're watching a lot of these bills really carefully just to make sure that we get the flexibility that we need to be able to do things, and certainly with data centers in particular, making sure that we also have the capacity to do things that the state is in some cases or some of our legislators are asking us to do.

[01:04:15] And so one of the things I think we should pay attention to is not just the land use components of the data centers, but the state oversight and the state data collection. Because in a lot of cases, they're asking local governments to measure things that we don't have the capacity to measure, that either are done by energy providers or by other state-regulated organizations.

[01:04:39] And so we're going to need the state to continue to be a partner with us to make the progress that we want to continue to make here. And so I appreciate a lot of focus on the legislative priorities. And I think we'll see some good things come out of this session and then have a conversation about how we might be able to implement those tools.

[01:04:57] But again, thank you, EQAC, for all your work. Always a professional document. And then let me just close by saying the work on the policy plan, you mentioned it here. Um, whether we agree with every word of the policy plan or not, I think the biggest takeaway for me is what you had on slide one, which is that it prompted better coordination.

[01:05:20] Uh, we have so many organizations, county organizations, citizen organizations, uh, working together on so many environmental causes, um, that it takes something at times like a policy plan to force that kind of collaboration and, and, um, you know, uh, partnership that we need on our environmental goals.

[01:05:41] And so I want to hopefully, you know, that type of stuff continues as we move forward because not one agency or one organization is going to fix some of these challenges we have, but it's going to take that continued coordination across county government and across our community to make this stuff happen.

[01:05:58] But thank you. Thank you. I also just want to thank you especially for all your comments, but especially the one on data centers and information collection because you were absolutely right to try to do all of that work on a local level would have all kinds of inconsistencies, extra work.

[01:06:18] And so I'm very pleased to hear you say that. I will make sure that when we write things, we make sure that we recognize that point. Thank you, both chairmen. I will turn over to Vice Chair Smith. So I see that Ken is listed as the photographer.

[01:06:37] So I take it these are your photos? Yes, they are. They are absolutely gorgeous. This is the type of stuff I like to put up in my office, but I was so curious about where these locations are. I can identify every location is within Fairfax County.

[01:06:56] Okay. And yes, if you need a photo, I will be happy to provide what you need. Okay, I love that. And you know I need to talk about the data center piece because I don't want somebody to watch this and think that the county, the Board of Supervisors, hasn't really done strategic, thoughtful work around data centers.

[01:07:16] And so back a couple of years ago when we were through the process to approve the Chantilly Premier Data Center in Sully District, there were a lot of comments from the community about noise, about distance to residences, all of these things. And it was a learning process for me as a supervisor with that project and for our staff.

[01:07:36] And so that information that we gathered going through that process informed what we did with the zoning ordinance. Things like a pre- and post-noise study, the distance from residential, how much buffering there should be. There is really a lot of good stuff that we put into that zoning ordinance for data centers that I don't think you would see anywhere else in the state that really was meant to protect data centers near residences, but also recognize that data centers are an important part of our economic development and we just need to cite them in the right place.

[01:08:11] And so I'm really proud of that work and where the board got. And then the follow-up to that was the language we put in the comprehensive plan. And so we did a lot of work. I think it was strategic work, and I think we hit the right place. I appreciate what the chairman said, because there's a lot of stuff about energy and other uses that we don't have the capacity with staff to deal with.

[01:08:33] So I just need to make sure that it's on the record that we really did strong strategic work around data centers, recognizing that we want some. We will never be a Loudon or Prince William. We don't want to be that, but we want that industry in the right places in the county.

[01:08:49] Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just? Yes, go ahead, Larry. I just wanted to say a couple words. One is that I very much appreciate what the county has done on data centers. I will also tell you that the work that has been done in Fairfax County, I think, has had a lot of influence on other jurisdictions.

[01:09:10] You look at Stafford County, for example, and other jurisdictions, I think they took what was done here, used it to start with, and then built on it and did more. And so I did not mean in any way to diminish the work.

[01:09:25] And I also appreciate the support that you have offered in terms of providing us information on data centers and facilitating discussions. Thank you. Okay, I will just keep going down the line. I see Supervisor Elkhorn. And then if you are interested, please let me know.

[01:09:43] Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to EQAC for continuing to be what I consider the environmental conscience for the Board of Supervisors. So keep doing what you're doing. You guys are doing fantastic. Really appreciate that. I did want to ask, and it was mentioned earlier, and it's not part of any of the presentations today, but the impact of the sewage spill.

[01:10:08] I don't know. I know that's something that is an issue. Maybe, Ken, I don't know if you have some insight that you would want to share. Yes, it, of course, happened after we put this current ARE to bed. But I think we still have a section on infrastructure for wastewater, page 40 if you're looking for it.

[01:10:31] And we are lucky. We have a number in this county. We have a number of sewers built in the 1970s, quite a large number, actually. And that's starting to approach the age of that one that failed in the district.

[01:10:46] And fortunately for us, we have a Department of Public Work, which is very forward-looking, and I want to compliment them on that. They also have a financial plan to match that forward-looking, forward-look.

[01:11:02] And with the public well aware now of what might happen if things go badly wrong with wastewater, I think this would probably be a very good time to take that financial plan very seriously. And I'll leave it up to the department to deal with that.

[01:11:19] But I think the public might be more receptive than they would usually be to doing what should be done to take care of our infrastructure. Well, I would add to that that I think as we talk about economic development, that's how we fund these important projects.

[01:11:37] So that's why I think, as Vice Chair Smith mentioned, right, balancing what we hope to do and then what we have to do to ensure that we continue to invest in things like our infrastructure that are not sexy, but are absolutely, you know, truly the ground that we step on and that allows us to have the benefits we have of living in this society, right?

[01:12:02] So I appreciate how we have to look at all of those pieces together and then planning ahead, as you said, both financially. And if you haven't had a chance to visit those sites or to go out with a DPWS team, I assume all of you have, to see how they monitor and plan.

[01:12:20] To me, it really is state-of-the-art work that they're doing. So I appreciate you bringing that up, Supervisor Alcorn. I'm just looking for hands. Okay, Supervisor Stork, and then we'll keep going down.

[01:12:36] I'll come back to Supervisor Herity. My apologies. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, CCAP, for bringing that up and making sure that we keep that in front of us. I know that you all, EQAC, is essential to keeping that in the forefront because CCAP doesn't work unless the community as a whole is working it.

[01:13:00] And so that's, I mean, I just want to keep reiterating that. I know Green Business Partners is another way of kind of making that broader. It's also the representation you all have in your communities. I think those are all essential parts, the difference that EQAC can make for us.

[01:13:17] And I continue to urge you to be advocates and to be engaging and hopefully bringing people in with you as part of those conversations. I know some of you, those are your life missions. So I know that I'm talking to the converted, if you will.

[01:13:32] But I just want to reiterate that. I think the biggest disappointment for me, and this is a county issue, but it's one that I know that you all are aware of, is that our recycling rate has gone down. I mean, that's deeply troubling, and I know that's part of what we've looked at for unified sanitation districts, but when you go from an average the last 10 years of 49% and you're going to 45%, that's absolutely heading in the wrong direction.

[01:14:01] And then paper cardboard in particular has had a dramatic decline, and maybe that's a key part of that difference, but we can't go that way. And I know you all and your advocacy helps us all to maybe keep our focus there.

[01:14:17] And then the other thing I would pick is an issue that I personally and folks in the southeastern part of the county particularly need your help with is the Aquacon water quality.

[01:14:36] I mean, until a couple years ago, I thought, oh, Aquacon water, you know, it's hopefully healthier, better than drinking it out of the Potomac River, and the answer to that is not. So even with all the other issues that they're having in the Potomac River now, the intakes are all above that point.

[01:14:53] But the amount of PFAS in the water at Occocon, it's above EPA levels. I've talked to Fairbox Water. They don't necessarily know how they're going to address that. I'm concerned that somebody will decide to raise those levels, even though there's not the science to back that up.

[01:15:11] I know that the key part of that is we don't know truly what the health effects of that are, but we also know that forever chemicals can't be good for the environment, period. So I really would ask you all to take that on because we know that's not a short-term issue, and EQUAC, that's truly been your success for all of us, is keeping our eye on longer-term issues that will have an incredibly important impact on our health.

[01:15:36] But thank you all very much for your work, and Mary in particular. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Stark. I will come back to Supervisor Herity and then continue down the line. Sorry about that. I was looking for a report from staff just to handle the recycling rates.

[01:15:52] I think one of the big reasons our recycling rates went down is because we pulled glass out of the recycle stream because glass wasn't actually being recycled and they're doing this separate collection in the bins. We used to tell people to put their glass bottles in even though they weren't being recycled until we started the Purple Can Club.

[01:16:11] Is that a question? I think, yeah, I'll phrase it as a question. So my understanding is, yes, the not recycling glass is having an issue. I also think there's also some questions, and really probably Director Harrington would be the one to address this.

[01:16:33] Yeah, I think he was. He's behind you. He's going to speak behind you. Chris Harrington, Director of Public Works and Environmental Services. So there is nuance in the calculation of the recycling rate that does have some bearing, and so I don't know that it is quite the reduction that it appears on its face, But I completely agree with the sentiment that we're not moving in the – we're not turning in the right direction with recycling, fundamentally.

[01:16:53] That's correct. All right. So the second one I heard early about the plastic bag huge reduction, and I know the Clean Fairfax Council put out a fairly unsubstantiated claim of a big drop in plastic bags, and staff came back by request in a February 27, 2025 memo, and their conclusion basically was thus staff finds the Clean Fairfax Council incorrectly utilized MS4 data to support their conclusion that plastic bags had been reduced in the environment.

[01:17:31] So I'm not going to disagree that I'm sure there's been some reduction, but we've got to be careful not to cite that Clean Fairfax claimed that there was a huge reduction. Do we have an actual number from staff? That would be helpful. John Morrill from Environmental and Energy Coordination.

[01:17:51] We had shared with the board, based on the tax revenue collected, the millions of bags that have been avoided, we can update that table and share that with the board as part of the follow-up we're doing for other matters.

[01:18:08] That would be very much appreciated. I know someone who goes out to help clean the streams, I see it anecdotally, but it would be good to have the data. All right, Mr. Haraday. And that was where I was going to turn to next because what I didn't see in the priority list, and I came to speak to you all about illegal dumping, I guess that was a year ago or so.

[01:18:27] I mean, to me, it's one of the things I hear an awful lot from residents, and I got a new complaint today. Somebody had dumped a bunch of huge office copiers and printers on the side of our roadways, And I think it's something that our residents want us to address, and it's something that there are a lot of creative ways to address.

[01:18:53] So, again, happy to come speak to you all again, but I'd appreciate seeing that. Certainly we've got Stream Shield. So you're looking at ways to reduce illegal dumping. Yeah. Just to make sure I'm understanding correctly.

[01:19:08] I just was – To look at it. Exactly. So I was in another jurisdiction two weeks ago, and they actually have signs, you know, \$500 for littering. And we, you know, in the one instance I talked to you about, we weren't able to get VDOT to get signs.

[01:19:28] But I think if we can look at that, I mean, we can, you can get fined up to \$1,000 for littering in Fairfax County. Most people don't realize that. But it's a, and I think there has to be a deterrent to it or it's going to be out of control. Thank you. It's also, you know, it is state law to stop for pedestrians, so I'm looking forward to those signs going up as well.

[01:19:52] Let's see. Next one I see is Supervisor Lusk. Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I will go with two points. The first is on the heat islands and trees, and I want to thank Mr.

Zaragoza for his previous conversations on this item as it related to mobile home communities, because we know that there are significant issues with the insulation of those units.

[01:20:20] They tend to have less than the normal homes. And thinking through having more tree cover, being able to address some of the heat-related issues that are attendant with those properties. So I just wanted to reiterate that point as we talk about heat islands and trees, that that is a place where we want to have a particular emphasis and to make changes there.

[01:20:44] And then my second one is on page six under smart growth. And I'll just dovetail a bit on the conversation that was started by Supervisor Stork. On the Occoquan Watershed, we are doing so many things on our side of the watershed.

[01:21:06] What is happening that is accretive and helpful on the Prince William County side of the watershed? Because I think, you know, this PFAS question and these issues that we're kind of grappling with, they're not going to be just solved on our side.

[01:21:22] So I guess the question is, how are we working with Prince William County? How are we getting them to maybe cooperate with us as we take the measures on PFAS and really improving the quality of the Occoquan?

[01:21:41] Is that a question? It is a question. Okay. I think he saw it as a question. Okay, just checking. So you're probably aware that Director Harrington has a whole group looking at modeling and PFAS and what makes a difference and what are the impacts.

[01:21:59] I also know that one of my friends is sitting on the water board for Prince William County. He is keenly interested in this whole issue and very frustrated over the development that has taken place and that is contributing.

[01:22:17] I mean, the point you're really making is you're having all this development on the Prince William side. We are doing everything we can to protect things on the Fairfax County side. The quality of the waters, Supervisor Stork highlighted, is a real issue, and the Occoquan as a reservoir is a very valuable thing that we need to preserve.

[01:22:39] But I can only say that Director Harrington and his group are doing some of the best work that's happening anywhere and serving as a model, but it's something that we need to continue to focus on, and that's a huge issue.

[01:22:59] Thank you. Yes, the only thing I will add is as a new chair here, I've also been added as the COG environmental rep for us. I don't know if your experience there being more active on the COG board or role, if that's an area where you've seen some coordination, That's the only one I've seen where there is that conversation.

[01:23:21] But I don't know if Supervisor Harrington wanted to add anything before I go back to my colleagues. To Chair Zaragoza's point, we are directly engaged through a partnership with Virginia Tech and Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory with Fairfax Water, and Prince William Water is right there at the table fully financially supporting that effort.

[01:23:39] And so that suite of models will enable land use analysis and scenario evaluation at an unprecedented level. There is direct study going on with respect to the salt in the Aquaman, which is very rapidly becoming problematic at approaching taste thresholds for us and is already killing aquatic life in

our streams from a variety of sources, as well as the concerns around PFAS, which have significant financial implications for all Fairfax water rate payers.

[01:24:04] So there is a lot of work being done in multiple venues on that. No, no, I appreciate that. And we'll just make the point that what is Prince William County doing specifically? I hear what you've just said, but the question is more directed at how are they taking some of the same steps that we're taking on our side, and how do we advance that cooperation between Fairfax County and Prince William to address a collective issue that we have? Thank you. It's a very good

[01:24:38] point, and we will come back to that soon. I will ask just, and I'm sorry I demoted you to supervisor, Director Harrington, as you continue that work and study, we'll find an appropriate time to be able to share that with this board and to see if there are further recommended actions that either we can take fully as a board, through COG, or through other initiatives.

[01:25:03] On that, real quick. Very briefly. Very briefly. No, I just want to thank Supervisor Lust for that, because we have a Prince William County committee on our board, and as far as I remember, I don't remember the last time that's met, But that might be the avenue to do that. And I would just throw that out to the county executive to see if we can't get that set up because that would be a great place to have that discussion.

[01:25:27] So that's my two seconds. Thank you for your recommendation. Supervisor Jimenez, I want to make sure everyone gets. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'll be mindful of the time. Just one comment, one question. Real quick, because the greener businesses keep coming up, as someone who's done this nationally at a national scale, I'm telling you that at the very least, you need some basic requirements.

[01:25:48] For like two or three years from now, we're going to be coming back here and saying we should have put some basic requirements on the table so that any company just can't jump on here and claim they're sustainable. What does that mean? You know, at the national level, when we did this, there were tons of groups that wanted to participate, but they wanted to participate so they could put it up on their website.

[01:26:08] And they could use it for themselves instead of actually doing what the county or at that time, you know, the organization wanted them to do. So I would just be very weary of having no requirements at all. I think that's going to become a problem. And then my question is, last year I was, during this, I remember I mentioned that it would be great to see more cooperation with the Planning Commission.

[01:26:31] And then I opened it up today and I saw that one of the first things that you talked about is more deeper collaboration with the Planning Commission, which I think is great can you explain to me or talk me through like what is that how has that been implemented or how will that be implemented and thank you for you know taking that up so the the planning commission uh it it started basically by by having more coordination with Mary Cortina who chairs the environmental part of the planning commission but in addition to that the chair of the planning commission has invited us to many of his meetings particularly when they have an

[01:27:04] environmental element and and so and they are very open to comments I feel like we have a great relationship I think one of my personal goals is to be able to manage any quack meeting the way that the chairman of the Planning Commission manages his meetings it's it's a very cooperative thing when we submitted comments on the on the environmental element of the comprehensive plan, that was done. We

did it actually in cooperation with the planning commission, met with individual members of the planning commission that had oversight

[01:27:42] over different areas. It's a change. Yeah, that's fantastic. I think that's a change that needed to happen. I'm glad to hear, and I just hope that next year we continue to hear even more that this partnership and cooperation is working. Thank you. Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez.

[01:28:00] I believe Supervisor Heiser had a comment. Yeah, no. Go ahead. Just really briefly, on the solar panels, there's a couple questions. I know there's a program called Solarize Virginia that had provided some either funding or grants to help get low-cost solar panels. Is that continuing, that program?

[01:28:19] John Morrill from OEEC. Yes, our office has been partnering with Solarize for many years to promote this group purchase opportunity for residents. And so we can share statistics on the number of installations that have occurred over time through that program.

[01:28:43] So there's Solarize and then there's another one called Solar or Switch Together. And so while we cannot provide financial incentives, we are promoting these opportunities for residents to get solar at a discount.

[01:28:59] Great. Thank you. And just one question. I know there's concerns about Dominion Energy's requirements, right, around interconnections, open interconnections. Do you know what the status of that is, what the SEC has ruled on that yet? Yes, the SEC has upheld Dominion's ability to require extra communication at systems over 250 kilowatts, which can add, depending upon where the system's located, it can add significant cost to a solar installation.

[01:29:33] I think it would be helpful to get that, because I know it impacts especially the large-scale solar installations and the cost to those as well. So it might be helpful to get more information on the impact of that ruling, especially as part of the legislative package. It's something we can advocate on the legislative side to help around that. So thank you.

[01:29:49] Will do. Thank you. As a fellow former school board member, I know that's a conversation we've been having for many, many years on that piece. I just want to echo our thanks to you, to Larry, to the entire team. and very much appreciate your continued work.

[01:30:07] As was said, the work of the environment is a passion of all of ours as well as every part of every agency in the county. And so the more we are able to understand where the ownership is and how we can help and count on you to help us guide and move forward, right, and understand when there are setbacks and where they are and where we need to look at legislation or outside authority to help us move further.

[01:30:35] So very much appreciate your work of EGWAC. Larry, I would say you're doing an excellent job chairing. So no need to look elsewhere, but I appreciate that bringing several committees or groups or bodies together is an added challenge, but I think helps us have a better outcome.

[01:30:53] So to that, I want to thank all of you, my colleagues, and for those of you watching at home, Our next environmental committee will be May 12th at 3 p.m. And with that, we are adjourned.



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