



Annapolis Environmental Commission
160 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

July 16, 2019

To: City Council Members

Re: AEC Input on O-25-19 Watershed Restoration Fund

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on O-25-19 Watershed Restoration Fund - For the purpose of modifying the functions of the Watershed Restoration Fund. The AEC suggests the following three revisions:

1) A provision should be added specifying that an annual report must be produced describing amount of funds raised and how the funds were spent, including the specific projects and any leveraging of external funding sources, including grants. The report should be shared with members of the public in a timely fashion by posting a link on the Department of Public Works website or other methods, to enhance transparency about how taxpayer dollars are being spent. Anne Arundel County is currently reporting annually on their watershed investment and restoration projects and this reporting may be a model for Annapolis to follow. (see: <https://www.aacounty.org/departments/public-works/wprp/financial-assurance-plan/AA%20FAP%20FY15%20corrected.pdf>)

To date, the data has not been readily accessible as it has been only reported in the budget.

2) The legislation should be amended to state that it will **not** be used for routine maintenance of existing stormwater practices that were in effect prior to the passage of the Watershed Restoration Fee legislation and do not lead to **new** nutrient reductions. The fund should be used exclusively for implementation and maintenance of additional/new projects that are delivering new nutrient and sediment reductions. The legislation does not need to specify which practices were pre-existing and which are new. Guidance on which practices and maintenance were existing and which are new should be determined by Public Works according to historical maintenance records and should be presented to the Environmental Matters Committee and the Council.

3) The amount of Watershed Restoration Funds that can be used for administrative functions should be limited to a reasonable percentage of the overall budget to ensure that most of the funds are spent on new stormwater projects. This thinking is in line with the state and county: At the state level, House Bill 987 (2012) specifies that funds should be limited to "reasonable costs necessary to administer the local watershed protection and restoration fund". In Anne Arundel County, 2018 administrative costs were 3% of total operating expenses in 2018. See page 17 of the attached document: https://www.aacounty.org/departments/public-works/wprp/annual-reports/WPRP2018FINAL_web-2.pdf

The City of Annapolis should strive to reach a similar percentage to Anne Arundel County and specify the allowable types of administrative activities.