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COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

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17 JAN 2022

The Honorable David L. Bulova
House of Delegates District 37
General Assembly Pocahontas Building, Room E208
P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218

Email: delDBulova@house.virginia.gov

Dear Delegate Bulova,

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) will not hold its Annual January Legislative Day in 2022 because of the virus. The following legislative priorities were approved by the VASWCD at our virtual Annual Meeting on Dec. 7th, 2021, as our Legislative Agenda for the 2022 session of the General Assembly. The full agenda is also enclosed. We request your support of these priorities in the 2022nd GA session.

- 1. Increase Operating Funds for the 47 districts.** Soil and Water Conservation Districts are the local program delivery mechanism for nonpoint source pollution control throughout the Commonwealth. Currently, the district appropriation is \$12,141,091. An increase of \$3.6million per year is needed.
- 2. Establish a dedicated and adequate, secure and stable source of funding for the Virginia Natural Resources Commitment Fund (VNRCF)** commensurate with the most recent Agriculture Needs Assessment Report and the most recent Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Waters Clean Up Plan Report.
- 3. Increase support for urban best management practices as a means to addressing WIP and TMDL needs to the Virginia Conservation Assistance program (VCAP).**
- 4. Increase funding for District Dam Repair and Maintenance Needs.** Twelve SWCDs in Virginia own and operate 104 small watershed flood control dams.

In addition to these 4 legislative priorities that would benefit all of VA's 47 Soil & Water Conservation Districts the VASWCD approved a number of new policies last December 7th. Two of those policies were proposed by and are particularly important to your NVSWCD. Invasive plants wreak havoc in many landscapes. Most landowners/users do not know how to control them, and many would prefer hiring someone to manage them. But information on methods and costs of invasive plant management is generally not accessible. The following policies adopted by the VASWCD further support efforts by

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Districts to provide resources, information, and recommendations that inform buyers and sellers of such management services as well as do-it-yourselfers.

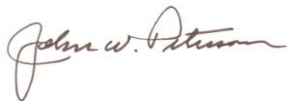
1. VASWCD will support a study of invasive plant species in Virginia and subsequently offer recommendations to reduce or eliminate the sale of invasive plants in the commonwealth and instead promote the sale of native plants.
2. VASWCD supports the development of a “Turf Replacement Manual” for the Commonwealth. This may be achieved by supporting a bill that requires one of the state agencies to contract with one of more state-supported universities on a competitive basis to develop the “Turf Replacement Manual.”

We are very grateful for Fairfax County’s strong support and believe during challenging economic times we continue to be an especially valuable County partner. Our special role allows us to complement and add value to County programs and services and extend programmatic reach beyond what is possible for County agencies alone. We also support the County’s compliance with requirements such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and MS4 permit. Our technical assistance to property owners with flooding concerns reduces the insurance rate for Fairfax County citizens through the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System.

After you and your staff have had some time to look at our note on legislative priorities and policies, I will follow up by phone. Should you want to talk to us about these priorities it would be easy to arrange a Zoom or Teams call for that purpose. Please contact our Executive Director Laura Grape at conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov and she will work with you on arranging that call. Our entire Board and staff are available to assist you.

We always appreciate what you do to promote environmental literacy and urban conservation in VA Del. Bulova, and we always appreciate your support of Virginia’s 47 Soil & Water Conservation Districts. I hope we can meet again in person soon.

Yours in conservation,



John W. Peterson, Chairman
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Attach: Approved VASWCD 2022 Legislative Priorities.
Cc. Peters, Koerner, Billger, Bordas, Grape, Gagnon, Glasgow, Hoffman, Campblin, McGovern, Cameron, NVSWCD; Graves, Davis, Boring, Wells, Tyree, Meeks, Rash, Frantz, VASWCD; Cristman, Glover, Cross, DCR.

