



February 11, 2008

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035-0079

Dear Chairman Connolly and Members of the Board:

We are pleased to learn that the Board is considering a Sustainable Development Policy for the County's future capital projects. Given their nature, capital projects should be carried out in an investment-like manner that recognizes the energy requirements for structures' operations and other environmental impacts of the projects' lifecycles. Our generation owes future generations the heritage of a stable global climate, which responsibility challenges us to preserve resources so that there is a reasonable assurance that the needs of future generations may be met. We believe policies and practices promoting progress towards a more sustainable relationship with the natural environment are responsive to that challenge.

The proposed Sustainable Development Policy adopts standards of the U S Green Building Council's LEED rating system and its third party certification process. The LEED rating system is comprehensive and gaining broad support locally and nationally for its inherent advantages. If implemented, this policy will reduce material and energy waste and enhance employee productivity by providing future office workers places with improved air quality and lighting. The LEED features will also provide a healthier and more comfortable experience for employees and citizens in County offices, and the third party oversight provides a greater assurance that the taxpayers receive what is pledged by contracted builders.

While the Policy will provide for a higher level of energy efficiency and conservation, it doesn't accomplish all that we believe it should at this time by taking advantage of the savings available through the efficiency and conservation practices under an energy efficiency standard. Under current LEED criteria, most, but not necessarily all, buildings qualifying for LEED Silver will include Energy Star qualification. Buildings constructed to the basic LEED certification design often do not. We believe that the Policy should include a high energy efficiency standard for all new construction and major renovations such as that offered through Energy Star. Adopting Energy Star as a requirement would facilitate progress in meeting the CoolCounties Pledge and the energy savings from such measures are likely to be recovered within a reasonable payback period.

We support the proposal, although we would prefer the above enhancement. We thank the Board for promoting this initiative.

Very truly yours,

Linda Freimark, Chair
Great Falls Group, Sierra Club