

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

c/o Department of Environmental Services 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705 Arlington, VA 22201

January 4, 2018 (Updated 1/23/18)

The Honorable Katie Cristol, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: E2C2 Recommendation for a Moratorium on Snow Storage and Melting at the Bluemont Park South Parking Lot

Dear Chair Cristol:

At its December meeting, E2C2 invited residents of the Boulevard Manor Community Association (BMCA) and the Department of Environmental Services (DES) to discuss the status of the Bluemont South Parking Lot, which has been designated as one of eight snow storage and snow melting locations in the County.

E2C2 heard from the BMCA president, Mr. Christopher Tighe, who presented maps of the area and photographs of DES snow storage and melting operations in 2016. He expressed concern about the health impact of those operations on medically vulnerable residents of the Civic Association. In particular, Mr. Tighe raised concerns about diesel emissions from large numbers of snow-laden dump trucks driving and idling in front of and behind the affected homes, as well as from equipment used to melt the large quantities of accumulated snow. E2C2 also heard from residents of the four homes immediately adjacent to the Parking Lot and the entrance to the Parking Lot. They outlined the specific medical conditions that make them vulnerable to harm from diesel exhaust:

- A three-month old infant undergoing a series of heart surgeries this fall and winter.
- A resident recovering from six months of hospitalization this year who now has limited lung function and spoke via video.
- A licensed day care provider who cares for young children, including some with conditions such as cystic fibrosis and asthma.
- A resident diagnosed with reactive airway disease who stated that diesel fumes from the County's snow-melting operation in 2016 had caused her condition and that future snow melting operations would cause her to experience severe asthma attacks.

DES declined to attend the meeting. In advance of the meeting, DES shared a letter it sent to BMCA in March, 2017 in which it stated that it is necessary to keep this location open to snow storage and melting until "more suitable locations are made available for snow storage in Arlington." The letter assured BMCA that, in the future, it will use a new more efficient and quieter snow melter, which it said will have lower emissions. DES also committed to locate the melter at least 100 feet from the property line of the nearest home and conduct melting primarily during daytime hours, for a maximum of 12 hours a day,

unless conditions require otherwise. BMCA indicated at the meeting that it does not believe that the letter from DES is an adequate response to the health concerns it has raised.

Although E2C2 is not in a position to ascertain whether the snow storage and melting operations have, in fact, affected residents' health, E2C2 does find the health and safety concerns raised by BMCA and its residents to be of sufficient concern to merit additional precautionary measures. Therefore, E2C2:

1. Recommends a moratorium on the use of this site for snow storage and melting until the health and safety of the medically vulnerable residents can be evaluated and reasonably assured.
2. Requests that DES meet with the Commission to fully detail the criteria it uses to locate its snow storage and melting operations and, in particular, how those criteria protect public health and the environment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Ng".

Christine Ng
E2C2 Chair

CC: Mike Moon, DES
Mike Collins, DES