

**ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**c/o Department of Environmental Services**  
**2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705**  
**Arlington, VA 22201**

July 22, 2019

The Honorable Christian Dorsey, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

**RE: 2019 Community Energy Plan Update: E2C2 Recommendations**

Dear Chair Dorsey:

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) and its Energy Committee express our deep appreciation to the County Board for its leadership and policy guidance on climate and energy issues during the ongoing process of updating Arlington's Community Energy Plan (CEP). The Board's willingness hold a work session on the most difficult aspects of the Plan was especially helpful.

We fully support the Board's adoption of carbon neutrality community-wide by 2050 as the overall goal of the Community Energy Plan. We believe this goal is appropriately ambitious, yet feasible. It brings the CEP into alignment with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal, the recommendations of the International Panel on Climate Change, and the values and aspirations of Arlington County's residents.

We also support the Board and staff recommendation of 100% renewable electricity by 2025 for County Government operations, and by 2035 community-wide.

We are in full agreement with decision to adopt equity as a lens through which the entire Plan should be considered.

We have two specific policy recommendations to strengthen the current text, both relating to important ways that the County Government can lead by example.

1. At the end of Policy 4.3 add: ***"A report will be provided to the County Board by May 1, 2021 on progress toward developing this blueprint. The report shall include a plan for the County Government to electrify its vehicle fleets by 2040 or sooner."***

Rationale: Success of the CEP depends on virtually eliminating emissions from the transportation sector. This milestone report will help ensure rapid progress in the transition away from fossil fuel vehicles. County Government fleets are a logical focus of early electrification planning, providing a powerful example for the broader community. Other localities are finding that the higher initial cost of electric vehicles is more than

offset by dramatically lower lifetime maintenance and fuel costs.<sup>1</sup> Extensive data, resources, advice and access to innovative buying pools and financing options are now available to fleet managers.<sup>2</sup>

2. Under Goal Area 5 add a new policy: ***“The County Government will strive to achieve net zero ready status in all new construction and major renovation of public buildings and facilities, consistent with Arlington’s Facility Sustainability Policy for New Construction and Major Renovation.”***

Rationale: County staff have made an important commitment to strive for net zero ready goals in future building and renovation projects through an administrative regulation adopted in April, 2019. The County Board can elevate this commitment by adopting it as a CEP policy.

In addition to these specific text changes, there are three broad strategies that we urge the Board to consider in the coming months:

- **Public policy in Richmond:** We urge the Board to consider strategies to increase its influence on energy policy at the state level. We believe that significant improvements are possible, and that Arlington can play a meaningful role in shaping policy to benefit CEP implementation, working with like-minded localities and organizations.
- **Staff and program resources:** CEP success will require fresh thinking, new initiatives and a “whole of government” approach to addressing climate change. We ask the Board to ensure that the AIRE team, in particular, has the resources it needs to assist the entire community in reaching the revised CEP’s ambitious goals.
- **Continued County Board engagement:** There is no substitute for this Board’s ongoing interest and engagement in advancing climate-related programs and policies in Arlington. The CEP Update will be followed by the more detailed CEP Implementation Framework, and by many initiatives that will flow from that document. We recommend that the Board schedule a work session or hearing on Arlington’s climate and energy progress on at least an annual basis.

We welcome questions about our recommendations at any time.

Respectfully,



Mike Hanna, Chair  
Environment and Energy Conservation Commission

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<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., “New York City says electric cars are the cheapest option for its fleet,” Michal J. Coren, Quartz, March 18, 2019, <https://qz.com/1571956/new-york-city-says-electric-cars-cheapest-option-for-its-fleet/>.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., excellent resources offered by Climate Mayors Electric Vehicle Purchasing Collaborative, <https://driveevfleets.org/>.