

March 10, 2017

The Honorable Terrence R. McAuliffe
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe:

As the current and former chairs of Alexandria's Environmental Policy Commission and concerned environmental leaders, experts, and advocates, we are writing to ask you to recommend amendments to House Bill 2383 and Senate Bill 898, which pertain to the City of Alexandria's Combined Sewer System.

We are seriously concerned that sewage from the City of Alexandria's Combined Sewer System (CSS) continues to overflow into our waterways, and agree with the General Assembly that the City should move with greater urgency to solve this problem. As written, however, the bill agreed in Conference imposes an arbitrary and unattainable deadline of July 1, 2025 that is not based on any meaningful assessment of the engineering required to meet the proposed remediation target.

According to experts, this legislation would require the City to build an underground storage tank roughly the size of football field in one of the Commonwealth's most urban and historic areas. We have not found an engineer who believes this to be feasible by 2025. As a result, the legislation sets an unattainable goal that would inevitably subject Alexandria and its citizens to punitive financial penalties with no additional benefit to our environment.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) is well positioned to set a reasonable timeframe by which the City can meet its clean water obligations. In fact, the City submitted its proposed Long Term Control Plan to DEQ last August as part of the well-established regulatory process by which municipalities work with the Commonwealth to ensure compliance with state and federal clean water requirements. This is the same process that Richmond and Lynchburg, the other Virginia cities with Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs), have followed to meet their obligations. We do not believe it is reasonable or proper for Alexandria to be treated differently.

Ideally, VDEQ should set the timetables for Alexandria's CSO work, since that is its regulatory responsibility. We realize, however, that the General Assembly is insisting that it assume that responsibility in this case.

Therefore, we recommend that you propose as amendments to these bills the language already

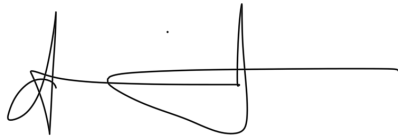
requested by the City of Alexandria: a deadline of 2024 for the City to start construction on the work at the 4 outfalls; a 2027 deadline for the City to complete construction, and authorization for DEQ to extend these dates if factors occur which prevent the City, for reasons beyond its control, from meeting the dates.

We thank you for your continued leadership to protect the Commonwealth's natural environment and appreciate your consideration of our request. If you or your staff would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Jim Kapsis at 202-413-5277 or at kapsisje@gmail.com.


Respectfully submitted,



Jim Kapsis, Chair
Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission



Danielle Fidler, Former Chair



Peter Pennington, Former Chair



Josh Sawislak, Former Chair



Kenyon Larsen, Former Chair



Jennifer Hovis, Former Chair



Scott Barstow, Former Chair