



January 19, 2021

Mr. Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Arlington County
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 318
Arlington, VA

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

EcoAction Arlington strongly supports a robust public engagement process for the Community Energy Plan Implementation Framework (CEP IF) and is dismayed at the very limited opportunity for the public to weigh in on this complex topic. Public input is essential for building community support and creating an ambitious but feasible roadmap for meeting the County's carbon neutrality goals. After months of delay, the community engagement process is now being compressed and does not allow for well-organized and well-publicized opportunities for education and input or any real substantive changes to the current version.

- To the best of our knowledge the only public announcements of the County's interest in soliciting public feedback on the CEP IF was made on December 26 and January 9 in ARLnow.com, and a link to the comment platform was posted on the AIRE website at about the same time.
- Even though this call for public engagement occurred during the winter holidays, the deadline for comment was set for January 15, although recently extended to February 1.
- Virtual public forums/workshops have been curtailed. The video on Buildings and Education/Behavior mentions three forums, but the other two videos indicate that there will be only one. As of yet, no date has been set for that single event.
- The proposed schedule calls for presentations to at least nine Commission and Community Group meetings in January and February with approval for the final version by the County Manager in February and the County Board in March,

We ask that the County delay final approval of this crucial document to allow for the robust public engagement it deserves. The County has invested a great deal of time, knowledge, and political will into the CEP IF but citizens have many competing priorities for their time and attention as we begin a new year. We understand the County is striving to serve its citizens during the pandemic, and many adaptations are required. The climate crisis, and impact of our action to respond, will long outlast current circumstances, however, making it critical that the County invests the time and effort to ensure a fulsome dialogue that will inform and improve the existing draft.

January 19, 2021

EcoAction Arlington's Advocacy Committee is reviewing the draft CEP IF and will provide a detailed assessment along with our recommendations shortly. We look forward to working with the AIRE Team to improve the draft so that the implementation plan matches the bold goals of the CEP.

Sincerely,

Jill Barker, Chair, EcoAction Arlington Board of Directors

Elenor Hodges, Executive Director, EcoAction Arlington

cc: County Board