



July 7, 2025

The Honorable Takis Karantonis
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: 1901 & 1911 Fort Myer Drive - One Rosslyn

Dear Chair Karantonis and members of the County Board:

Sierra Club's Potomac River Group, EcoAction Arlington, and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions Arlington Hub are alarmed that the One Rosslyn project is moving forward with minimal sustainability requirements and contrary to the County's recently adopted Climate Resolution and its long-term climate goals. Penzance is not participating in the Green Building Incentive Policy. We do not believe this decision absolves Penzance from its obligation to meet core Arlington community climate-related needs and values through the site plan process. These values are not reflected by current standard site plan conditions.

To meet the County's goal for carbon neutrality and address the climate crisis, all new buildings should be highly energy efficient, all-electric, reduce the embodied carbon in building materials and construction and embrace the County's biophilic goals. Penzance does not score well in any of these areas.

We urge the County Board not to approve this project until, at minimum, the site plan conditions include the following:

- LEED v4.0 Gold as proposed by Penzance and in line with the GBIP baseline required rather than the site plan conditions of LEED Silver. At this point LEED v4.0 is outdated and largely reflects standard building practices in our region.
- The GBIP baseline of 24 percent energy savings rather than Penzance's proposed 20 percent or higher. Penzance should also be expected to update its energy model to identify and explore the feasibility of additional energy savings opportunities that will save residents money, make the building more resilient to higher temperatures and weather-related outages, and reduce the building's future carbon emissions.

- Electric cooking in all units, including the condos, in which Penzance is currently planning to provide gas stoves. There is growing public awareness of the proven health and safety risks of gas cooking, and induction stovetops are becoming increasingly popular as a healthier, safer, and more energy efficient luxury option.
- GBIP baseline requirements for bird-friendly glass and light pollution reduction, which are particularly crucial for this site given its location near Gateway Park and the Potomac River.
- The minimum electrical infrastructure necessary to allow for expansion of EV charging in the parking garage to support the transition to electric vehicles.
- A lifecycle carbon assessment and a minimum reduction in embodied carbon of 20 percent. The building will require carbon intensive steel and concrete but a growing number of suppliers can now provide less carbon intensive variations as well as other environmentally sustainable materials.

The County Board should also expect Penzance to explore design options for an all-electric building and at minimum ensure that the building will be electric ready. The current design calls for use of supplementary gas for both the primary heating and ventilation systems, in addition to gas for cooking in the condos. An [electrification report](#) completed for Arlington in 2020 by Steven Winter Associates rated several options for all-electric HVAC systems for multi-family as mature, although the system most adaptable for high-rises faced height constraints that can be overcome with careful design. Technology since then has only continued to mature, including for much more energy efficient heat pump water heaters. Last year a [44-storied all-electric, very energy efficient skyscraper apartment building](#) in Brooklyn opened its doors, a clear demonstration of what is achievable.

We are facing a climate crisis and Arlington has repeatedly committed to advancing solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption and make the County more resilient in the light of more extreme weather. Buildings that have a tight building envelope and energy-efficient, all-electric systems for heating, cooling, hot water, and other uses will not only reduce their GHG emissions, particularly as the electric grid shifts to renewable energy sources, but will be healthier and more resilient during heat waves and power outages. Expecting developers to align with County goals is essential to meeting our goals and values. It is crucial to avoid on-site combustion of fossil fuels for key systems. As the first rule of holes goes, “if you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.”

We look forward to discussing these issues in greater detail at any time.

Sincerely,

/s/_____

Elenor Hodges
Executive Director, EcoAction Arlington

Julie Rosenberg
Leader, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, Arlington Hub

Dean Amel
Chair, Sierra Club – Potomac River Group

cc: Mark Schwartz, County Manager
Jennifer Fioretti, Assistant County Manager for Climate Policy
Jason Papacosma, Chief, Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management
Anthony Fusarelli, CPHD Director