



Faith Alliance for
Climate Solutions
Arlington



SIERRA CLUB
POTOMAC RIVER GROUP

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Matt de Ferranti
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Leckey Gardens Affordable Housing Project

Dear Chair de Ferranti and County Board Members:

Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, EcoAction Arlington, and the Sierra Club's Potomac River Group urge the County Board to withhold approval of the Leckey Gardens Affordable Housing Project until True Ground Housing Partners commits to meeting higher standards for energy efficiency, electrification, and other key sustainability features. We strongly support the expansion of affordable housing offered by this project, particularly the inclusion of multiple family-friendly two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments. However, True Ground Housing Partners' unwillingness to commit to more than the minimum site plan condition requirements for sustainability is short-sighted, not in the best interests of future residents, and undermines the County's climate goals.

To meet the County's carbon neutral by 2050 goal, all new buildings should be highly energy efficient and all electric. A building meeting these standards will be more affordable to residents due to substantially lower utility costs. It also will protect residents from the volatility of energy costs, and from displacement during extended power outages because the building will maintain a comfortable temperature for a longer period of time.

Leckey Gardens estimates its site Energy Use Intensity (EUI) at 45. That is 50 percent higher than the recently approved Melwood site plan, which was just below 30. EUI is a standard measure of energy used per square foot. Using 50 percent more energy per square foot will result in substantially higher utility costs for Leckey Gardens residents for decades to come. Plans should be adjusted to reduce EUI to a level similar to Melwood's prior to approval.

Opportunities to advance climate, energy, and affordability goals at Leckey Gardens include:

- **A tight, high-performing building envelope.** This would reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool the building, reduce energy costs and increase climate resilience for future residents.
- **All-electric, highly efficient HVAC technology.** Currently, the project plans to use a gas-fired boiler to heat air for the building's ventilation system. Many recent projects have shifted to more efficient, less carbon intensive heat pump boilers with auxiliary backup electric or gas for very low temperatures. The recently approved [Inn at Rosslyn](#) is exploring HVAC systems that could reduce energy use by more than 35 percent. The [energy model](#) for this project lists several options that would have a high impact on reducing energy use in the ventilation system.
- **Heat pumps for water heaters and clothes dryers.** Available water heater options include in-unit, centralized, and tankless. Heat pump technology is much more energy efficient than the proposed electric resistance options.

The project should also incorporate charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and e-bikes to ensure that residents are not left behind as the transition to electric vehicles proceeds. To address True Ground Housing Partnership's expressed concern that the building would not have enough transformer capacity to support EV charging and other modern needs, we encourage the County to work with them and Dominion to ensure needs are met. It is essential to provide adequate transformer vault size and capacity from the outset, and Dominion is required by law to meet reasonable needs.

Sustainability and climate resilience are not a luxury and should be a core design principle for all projects. Meeting higher standards will ensure long-term cost savings, a healthier environment, and protection from climate risks for residents. The County should require no less.

Sincerely,

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, Arlington County Manager
Jennifer Fioretti, Assistant County Manager for Climate Action
Jason Papacosma, Bureau Chief, Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management
Samia Byrd, Director, Community Planning, Housing and Development
Nia Bagley, Chair, Planning Commission