

MOTION: FREED

**July 23, 2026,
Regular Meeting
Res. No 26-013**

SECOND: BOUTTE

**RE: RECOMMENDATION TO PETITION THE GOVERNOR AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FOR INCLUSION IN
WESTERN VIRGINIA GROUNDWATER REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

ACTION: APPROVED

WHEREAS, western Prince William County shares identical hydrogeologic vulnerabilities with western Loudoun and Fauquier counties, specifically sitting atop the Culpeper Basin—a fractured-rock sedimentary aquifer system characterized by low specific yield, minimal localized water storage capacity, and extreme vulnerability to rapid depletion; and

WHEREAS, approximately 50,000 residents in rural western and mid Prince William County rely entirely upon roughly 16,000 private wells for their sole source of potable drinking water; and

WHEREAS, groundwater discharge serves as the vital baseflow sustaining localized stream systems during dry periods, which in turn feed directly into major regional public surface water assets, including the Occoquan Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, the overall imperviousness of the Occoquan watershed is about 10% and rising, with several subwatersheds as high as 24% to 72% impervious cover according to the Center for Watershed Protection; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Sustainability Commission previously recognized the severe data deficit and vulnerabilities facing the county's aquifers under Resolution No. 24-013, which motivated the Board of County Supervisors to initiate collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to execute a Soil-Water-Balance recharge study; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly enacted Budget Amendment Item 366 #2c, which mandates that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) evaluate the necessity of establishing a Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) and propose statutory restrictions to protect future water supplies, but restricted the geographic scope exclusively to Loudoun and Fauquier counties; and

WHEREAS, excluding Prince William County from this state-level evaluation creates a dangerous regulatory gap, allowing uncoordinated, high-impact industrial and residential groundwater withdrawals to compromise the shared structural fracture networks of the Culpeper Basin without state oversight;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Prince William County Sustainability Commission does hereby recommend and advise the Prince William Board of County Supervisors to immediately draft and adopt a formal resolution petitioning the Governor of Virginia and the Director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to:

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1. **Expand the Geographic Scope:** Formally include western Prince William County in any active and future DEQ working groups, study areas, and resulting regulatory frameworks regarding western Piedmont and Culpeper Basin groundwater management.
2. **Integrate Local Data:** Direct DEQ to synthesize Prince William County's USGS Soil-Water-Balance data alongside the Loudoun and Fauquier datasets ahead of the December 31, 2026 legislative reporting deadline.
3. **Establish Protection:** Ensure that any future western Groundwater Management Area designation or water-efficiency restrictions on data center cooling and high-volume utilities apply to the fractured-rock aquifers of western Prince William County as well as to those aquifers in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sustainability Commission requests that a copy of this resolution be forwarded directly to the Prince William County Legislative Delegation to the General Assembly to initiate corresponding legislative budget amendments as needed to implement these recommendations.

Votes:

Ayes: By acclimation

Nays: None

Absent from Vote: Commissioners Warren Beeton, Edwin Gonzalez

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Salita Gray

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of Sustainability Commission