

Resolution:
September 15, 2026

**RE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO OPPOSE SIGNIFICANT
DIVERSIONS FROM THE OCCOQUAN WATERSHED FOR CONSUMPTIVE USE**

WHEREAS, the public water supply for **Prince William County** is provided by Prince William Water and Virginia American Prince William District; and

WHEREAS, **Prince William Water** provides high-quality drinking water, primarily purchased from Fairfax Water, to over 380,000 people in the Prince William County community, as well as the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park; and

WHEREAS, **Virginia American Prince William District** provides high-quality drinking water, purchased from Fairfax Water, to approximately 50,000 residents in Dale City; and

WHEREAS, the **Occoquan Reservoir** is one of Fairfax Water's two key community water supply sources (the other being the Potomac River); and

WHEREAS, the **Occoquan Reservoir** indirect potable reuse system has been recognized nationally and internationally as a highly successful model to enhance drinking water supply reliability through advanced wastewater treatment and resource recovery, specifically by the return of treated wastewater from the Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA) to the Occoquan watershed; and

WHEREAS, **UOSA** is a regional joint venture of the jurisdictions of Fairfax County, Prince William County, City of Manassas, and City of Manassas Park, and operates a regional water reclamation facility that discharges high-quality effluent (or return flows of treated wastewater) to the Occoquan Watershed; and

WHEREAS, **UOSA** effluent routinely accounts for a significant portion of total inflow to the Occoquan Reservoir and up to 90% of all inflows during drought conditions, making it essential to the drinking water supply of the Northern Virginia region as a primary source of drinking water in eastern Prince William County and eastern Fairfax County; and

WHEREAS, treated wastewater from **UOSA** is necessary for **Fairfax Water's** Griffith Water Treatment Plant to produce drinking water at its constructed capacity and to meet Fairfax Water's commitments to customers in Prince William County; and

WHEREAS, the **Occoquan Policy** (codified at 9VAC25-410) was adopted in **1971** to protect the region's drinking water supply; and

WHEREAS, on June 5, **1978**, the **Fairfax County Board of Supervisors** approved the concept of UOSA selling its' effluent to another party rather than discharging it to Bull Run and the Occoquan Reservoir subject to certain conditions to protect the Occoquan Reservoir supply, including that

the UOSA effluent, if diverted for an intervening reuse, would be used only for non-consumptive purposes and ultimately be returned to the reservoir in quality equal to or better than UOSA effluent quality; and

WHEREAS, on June 9, **2026**, based on awareness of renewed interest in diversion of wastewater that would normally be treated by and discharged from UOSA to Bull Run and the Occoquan Reservoir, the **Fairfax County Board of Supervisors** reaffirmed and restated Fairfax County's position; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2026, the **Prince William County Board of County Supervisors** affirmed its opposition to diversions from the Occoquan Reservoir for consumptive use; and

WHEREAS, Prince William County established a climate resilience goal through Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) Resolution No. 20-773 on November 17, 2020; and

WHEREAS, climate change is expected to make droughts worse, so that low flows will get even lower, particularly during heat waves when water demand is highest; and

WHEREAS, the County's Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP) identified water as being among the most important resources affected by climate change, and thus one of the top priorities for improving resilience; and

WHEREAS, any measures that would divert inflows to the Occoquan for consumptive use (such as evaporative cooling) would exacerbate the low flow problems associated with climate change, reducing resilience rather than increasing it; and

WHEREAS, the **Prince William County Sustainability Commission** supports the efforts of all jurisdictions, entities, and policy bodies to exercise stewardship to maintain and increase protection of the Occoquan Reservoir and Watershed, and urges all jurisdictions, entities, and policy bodies to collaborate, cooperate, and join together to protect the Occoquan Reservoir, Watershed, and their source water;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the **Prince William County Sustainability Commission** recommends that the **Prince William County Board of County Supervisors** support protection of the Occoquan Reservoir by 1) opposing diversions of UOSA effluent for consumptive reuse as they carry risks of diminishing the region's drinking water supply from the Occoquan Reservoir, and 2) opposing any other significant diversions of inflows to the Occoquan Reservoir, unless mitigating steps are taken to protect and ensure the continuous safe yield of the Occoquan Reservoir necessary to support existing and future residential communities as envisioned in the Fairfax County and Prince William County comprehensive plans, including appropriate safeguards for potential drought conditions or public emergencies.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent from Vote:

Absent from Meeting:

ATTEST:

Clerk of Sustainability Commission