



CLIMATE COALITION

Montgomery County, MD

To: Council President Fani-Gonzalez and Council Members
From: Climate Coalition Montgomery County
Date: April 7, 2027
RE: FY27 Budget Request

My name is Kevin Walton, for the Climate Coalition Montgomery County. We thank every councilmember and their staff for having meetings with us to discuss climate and environmental budget priorities. We look for today's reminders to spur you into the actions demanded by the climate emergency.

MoCo Green Bank

For the Green Bank, fully fund the FY27 budget allocation. To support their energy efficiency and resiliency work, the Green Bank receives, by law, 10% of the fuel energy tax. This budget meets that requirement. That is gratifying as the Green Bank is the primary way the county keeps their promise to the business community to help them meet the Building Energy Performance Standards. As other funding sources, notably the federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, will not be coming, the fuel energy tax funds are more important than ever.

Public transport

On transportation, residents need more frequent buses now. With affordability challenges increasing, we need convenient, reliable Ride On buses and other low-cost transportation. For the Upcounty:

- Extend Route 101 ExtRa to Clarksburg with more buses serving this popular route
- Give Damascus residents every day access to Shady Grove Metro by adding Ride On Route 90 weekend service
- Provide more frequent buses for the high demand Ride On route 55
- For the Downcounty, begin Goldsboro Road Project P501917, starting with River Road to Redwing Road to address pedestrian and traffic safety for the Bannockburn and Wood Acres neighborhoods.

Artificial Turf

On artificial turf, support the redirected funds to grass fields, away from the Public School's synthetic turf request. The seventy million dollars is better spent on real grass with the substantial remaining funds addressing school infrastructure problems, such as HVAC.

- Grass fields can be high performing and durable.

- Plastic turf generates hundreds of tons of waste and sheds microplastics into the air, soil, water AND our student users.
- Plastic fields in the sun can be hotter than 120 degrees, while grass stays close to the air temperature.
- Keep real grass in the budget, for our climate, environment and the health of our students.

Planning Board

Two urgent priorities are needed for the Planning Department, the only agency that can integrate climate concerns into land use, zoning, and development decisions.

Please fund:

- A one-time \$150 thousand dollars to develop a Climate Master Plan; and
- \$160 thousand dollars to fund a Climate Specialist

The Climate Master Plan will identify our county's vulnerabilities and how to address them.

The Climate Specialist will provide the needed improved analysis for the mandated climate assessments for zoning text amendments and master plan, and lead the county's climate resilience work, including heat mapping, tree inventories, and climate tools.

Incinerator

Regarding the incinerator, you must support the solid waste management budget plan, a safe, cost-effective strategy. The contract cannot legally be shared till its finalized, but the DEP and County Executive assured the Council that the strategy

- Can be effectively implemented
- Is below the cost of incinerating
- Produces about half the greenhouse gases and many times less toxic emissions than currently.
- The landfills meet strict environmental justice criteria.
- Our ash will no longer be dumped on a minority community.
- Eliminates the risk for more dioxin contamination from the aging incinerator.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our input for the FY27 budget.

Sincerely,

Kevin Walton

Coordinating Committee Member

On Behalf of our member organizations:

350 Montgomery County

ACQ Climate (Ask the Climate Question)

Bethesda Green

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Elders Climate Action
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Study Group
Friends of Sligo Creek
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Green Sanctuary Committee of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Silver Spring
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
One Montgomery Green
Poolesville Green
Safe Healthy Playing Fields
Sugarloaf Citizens' Association
Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended/M-83 (TAME)
The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee (TPMEC)
Zero Waste Montgomery County