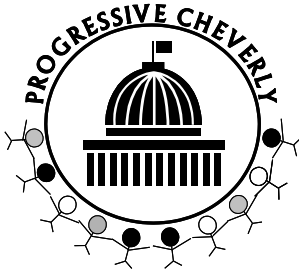


Progressive Cheverly
Democracy from the Ground Up
progressivecheverly.org



3020 Parkway
Cheverly, MD 20785

September 19, 2012

Rushern L. Baker III
Prince George's County Executive
County Administration Building
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Suite 5032
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3050

Council Chair Andrea C. Harrison
Prince George's County Council
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, 2nd Floor
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3050

Reference: Prince George's County Ten-year Solid Waste Management Plan

Dear County Executive Baker and Council Chair Harrison:

Progressive Cheverly submits these comments for consideration regarding the Draft 2012 - 2022 Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan (Draft Plan) recently released by the County Department of Environmental Resources. Progressive Cheverly strongly supports programs and policies that minimize the amount of waste generated and transported to the Brown Station landfill and would urge the County to set a long-term goal of achieving zero waste.

While the County has made important strides in reducing the volume of waste being disposed of in the County's landfill, the pace of progress has slowed significantly. With the development of a new ten-year solid waste management plan, we urge the County Executive and County Council to reassess the County's

goals and plans. Many forward-looking jurisdictions around the United States are setting zero waste goals (90% + diverted from landfills and incinerators) and creating innovative solutions to achieve those goals. We believe Prince George's County can and should be among them. Zero waste will provide long-term financial savings to the County, promote economic development and help achieve County and national goals of sustainability.

As you may already be aware, Cheverly recycles at a high rate, and this has significantly reduced our waste footprint. Progressive Cheverly, working with the town, initiated a home composting program that has already reduced food scrap waste by 10%. This project has met with overwhelming enthusiasm to the extent that we have difficulty keeping up with the demand for composting bins.

Seriously working towards a zero-waste goal means at least the following should be addressed in the ten-year plan:

- **Change the County's waste pickup to once/week.** It has been documented that this change could increase recycling by up to 10% over current rates.
- **Significantly increase commercial and multi-family unit recycling.** These are areas that have lagged significantly behind in the County's recycling efforts.
- **Add food scrap waste to the present yard waste-composting program.** Both could be picked up at the same time. We appreciate, and strongly support, the Draft Plan's consideration to adapt the current yard waste composting facility to be able to include food scraps. An effective program to compost food scraps could reduce overall waste by 20%. We also support College Park's suggestion to consider smaller public, private, and non-profit composting facilities throughout the County to reduce the cost of transportation. Supporting composting at home through a rebate program for the purchase of compost bins would also be a sensible approach that has already proved successful in Cheverly.
- **Encourage and make investments to support local materials recovery businesses** to keep furniture, electronics, and other products out of the waste stream and promote economic development. In our area Community Forklift and Goodwill Industries collect bulk products / waste to be repurposed.
- **Ensure that any transfer station built is designed and sized so as not to undercut efforts to reach the long-term zero waste goals.** Under current trends, the Brown Station landfill will reach full capacity before the end of this ten-year plan. We understand that the County may need to build a transfer station and consider how to deal with waste and decide where it may be shipped. Any transfer station must be compatible with the various zero waste initiatives and not compete with those initiatives for resources. Further, the assumption in the draft that the level of waste will remain the same over an extended period of years, without concrete, significant steps to minimize waste, is excessively

conservative. Shipment of materials to out-of-county landfills or incinerators is environmentally destructive and inefficient. We in Progressive Cheverly feel that transferring our waste overflow to another location, wherever it may be, is an unacceptable solution to the problem. We are stewards of the earth's environment whether inside our boundaries or elsewhere.

• **Work with the school system to expand recycling and food waste composting.** The schools in the County should be required to at least recycle paper, plastic, and glass. School food waste should also be part of a county composting program.

We recognize that these initiatives have startup capital and other costs, but they will more than pay for themselves. In the long run, taking these kinds of steps will help reduce waste management costs for tipping fees and shipping, create local jobs while adding tax revenue to the County, decrease our environmental footprint, reduce methane greenhouse gas emissions, and move us forward on a path of sustainability.

Thank you for considering our comments on the Draft 2012 – 2022 Solid Waste Management Plan. We look forward to your response and further discussion as the Plan moves forward.

Sincerely

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Co-chairs, Progressive Cheverly Environmental Committee

cc.
Carla A. Reid
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