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Public comment on the Proposed 2021 MWRD Budget

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pronouns: he/him/his

[Begin Public Comment]

I am here today on behalf of the Metropolitan Planning Council to ask for your continued prudence as stewards' of the 2021 budget—a budget which I believe lacks critical funding to effectively staff the Stormwater Trading pilot which you and your fellow commissioners unanimously voted to approve last May.

Your vote established a 5-year pilot in 2 of the 7 watersheds managed by the District. I suspect that many of you cast your vote in part because you value the careful consideration of Director Perkovich and his team; you value they consulted time and again with their Technical Advisory Committee to develop a solution that addressed community concerns that the use of offsite facilities might cause adverse local impacts; and you value that a trading pilot may be able to accelerate stormwater management in disproportionately impacted communities. And, I don't know for sure, but I suspect you also value that this pilot could evolve to be a permanent tool in the District's flooding and stormwater management toolkit—a program intended to leverage a relatively small, strategic investment by our public utility for outsize impact through the private development market.

Today, nearly 7 months since your vote, not a single Developer has taken advantage of this Pilot program. I've spoken to developers and to staff. While we may debate the Why's of this... I think it is fair to say it is not because of a lack of interest by developers.

Through our analysis of other environmental markets, including Washington DC's Stormwater Trading Market, I believe the District's biggest challenge to a successful Pilot is to ensure Developers who want to participate have clear guidance and on-going support. To overcome this challenge... **We request the District allocate a dedicated, full-time staff to this pilot in 2021 through an addition to this budget.**

(Cont.)

Learning from other markets, this position should be empowered with the following responsibilities to:

1. **Be a resource for Municipalities who are on the frontlines meeting with developers...**
 - a. *You want to find projects at 30% design when financing and sizing is most fluid, not at 95% when project details are set.*
2. **Develop program guidance and provide support for Developers...** to remove unintended barriers and increase pilot participation.
 - a. You want it to be easy for developers to participate in this pilot.
3. **Provide a clear Line of Reporting to Senior Leadership...** to ensure any challenges encountered over the course of pilot are able to be quickly addressed.
 - a. You want to empower staff to elevate challenges for quick resolution; 5-years is too short a time to be delayed.

Make no mistake, our District's staff are capable and dedicated, and continue to show leadership on this nationally innovative project. Our request is intended to compliment these existing, full-time capacities & experience, with dedicated and focused attention to supporting the success of this pilot.

Thank you for your consideration. Does the Board have any questions?

[End Public Comment]