



Aurora Highlands Civic Association

Arlington County Board
Arlington County Manager
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

April 13, 2018

Dear Members of the County Board and County Manager Schwartz,

The Arlington Water Pollution Control Plant has been working on a Solids Master Plan with community input since December 2015, an effort that is nearing completion. The preferred alternative for processing solids at the plant into the future involves a process that would digest the residual sludge, creating a final product that could be used as a soil amendment. A byproduct of this process is methane gas, which could either be utilized to generate electricity on site or be used as fuel for the WMATA and ART bus fleets across S. Eads St.

Although the project has green credentials there are serious concerns regarding emissions and cost that need to be addressed before the project can be allowed to go ahead.

Cost:

The Arlington CIP includes a line item of \$150 million for the future upgrades, which would represent a debt service of \$12 million per year for 20 years—clearly a large sum of money.

Emissions:

An emissions study has been performed after pressure was applied from the representative of the Aurora Highlands Civic Association among others. Preliminary results of the study were presented by staff in March 2018. Emissions from the flaring and combustion of biogas include constituents that are harmful to health such as: NO₂, SO₂, CO, Inhalable PM₁₀, and Fine Particulate Matter. The preliminary study results show that additional controls would be required to prevent emissions under some of the alternatives from exceeding EPA's thresholds, and all of the alternatives would contribute to worsening air quality outside the plant. Residents live directly across the road and on the hill above the plant that would be directly affected by the worsening in air quality. An alternative solution that would greatly alleviate the two concerns above would be to transport the residual sludge to DC Water Blue Plains Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant in southeast DC, where it would be treated in a state-of-the-art facility that produces renewable energy and a final product that is being used as a soil amendment. The scale of the Blue Plains plant (10 times the size of Arlington's plant) makes DC Water's process cost effective.

Arlington staff have approached DC Water regarding a possible partnership but there is no agreement at this time. The Aurora Highlands Civic Association is very concerned about the adverse emissions and high cost of the preferred alternatives and urges the County Board to apply pressure on county staff to ensure that a partnership with DC Water or other regional partner be given every opportunity to succeed.

We thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Natasha Atkins
President, AHCA