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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball
Chairman, Howard County Council
George Howard Building, 1st Floor
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Dr. Ball:

Columbia Association (CA) would like to express its support for the Department of Public Works budget request for watershed-related improvements associated with the Little and Middle Patuxent River Watershed Assessments and CA's opposition to Council Bill 52-2015, which would eliminate the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee.

CA believes that stormwater management is a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors. Stormwater is generated from all of the developed land in the county, regardless of ownership or use. Uncontrolled or poorly controlled stormwater is a major cause of the erosion occurring in our streams. This erosion threatens both private and public infrastructure, homes and businesses. The sediment generated by the erosion has a tremendous negative impact on our rivers, streams, ponds and lakes and has caused the imposition of regulatory mandates like the sediment Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, for the Little Patuxent. CA, the County and a number of other organizations are spending millions of dollars to deal with the issue.

The cost of the recent sediment dredging projects for the three CA lakes — Lake Elkhorn, Lake Kittamaqundi and Wilde Lake — totaled some \$13.5 million, most of which was paid for by CA. CA has developed a watershed management plan largely funded from CA and supplemented with state grants. Over the last six years, CA has committed \$3.3 million toward addressing stormwater management problems.

CA is committed to continue to work towards addressing the stormwater being generated on our properties. CA is building bioretention facilities in open space to treat stormwater runoff from our buildings and parking lots. In a few cases, we have also built facilities to treat stormwater from other property owners' roadways, buildings and parking lots whose runoff has negatively impacted our property. Using a grant from the State of Maryland, we have developed a rain garden cost share program where, through the grant funding, Columbia residents living in the Little Patuxent watershed pay only 25 percent of the cost. To date, we have built 230 rain

gardens through the program. That translates into 230 residents taking responsibility for runoff generated on their properties.

CA is very interested in partnering with Howard County to help move some of the projects outlined in the Little and Middle Patuxent River Watershed Assessments forward. We also wholeheartedly endorse the projects in CA open space included in the Department of Public Works budget request.

CA also agrees with the concept behind the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee. We believe a dedicated funding source will allow the County to address the stormwater issues it faces. The fee motivates property owners, both residential and commercial, to think about the stormwater generated on their properties and provides some incentives for property owners to address the stormwater generated from their properties. CA opposes Council Bill 52-2015 and encourages the County Council to vote against CB-52.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 410-715-3110.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Milton W. Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Milton W. Matthews
President/CEO

cc: Columbia Association Board of Directors