

AGENDA NOTE – HRPDC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

ITEM #9-F: MODIFICATION TO LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

SUBJECT:

HRPDC Staff monitoring local legislative agenda packages and pre-filed legislation has highlighted some needed changes and additions to the HRPDC Legislative Agenda.

BACKGROUND:

Two items with significant financial impact to localities have been pre-filed for the 2015 General Assembly Session:

HB 1293 Stormwater fees; exemptions for religious groups: Requires the State Water Control Board, in establishing a statewide fee schedule for stormwater management programs, to waive permit fees for land-disturbing activities undertaken on property owned by certain churches, religious associations, or denominations. The bill also requires localities to waive stormwater management program service charges for properties owned by such organizations.

HB 1294 Churches and other religious bodies: Exempts churches, religious associations, and religious denominations from all state and local taxes, fees, and other charges.

The Regional Environmental Committee discussed both bills and recommended opposing HB 1293 and HB 1294 due to the substantial negative impact on locality budgets.

Balloon Releases: The Virginia Code currently allows the release of up to fifty (50) balloons an hour. However, balloons are a substantial threat to waterfowl and the environment and allowing the release of 49 balloons seems excessive. Balloons are a significant part of the litter collected from most waterways. This item was originally added to the regional legislative agenda based on local legislative priorities. That request to the GA has since been amended to ban balloon releases, and as such, the PDC package should be consistent.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Amend the HRPDC Legislative Agenda to reflect local and Committee recommendations to oppose HB 1293 and HB 1294 and to support a ban on balloon releases.