



Conservation
Montgomery



Stormwater Partners Network Thanks Montgomery County Council for Overriding Executive Leggett's Veto of the Stormwater Capital Budget

Budget still cut hundreds of millions of dollars

Groups will testify at the July 10th public hearing on the compromise plan

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Contact: Caroline Brewer, 301-652-9188 ext. 23 (office), caroline.brewer@anshome.org, or Eliza Cava, 301-652, 9188 x 22, eliza.cava@anshome.org

Chevy Chase, MD - On June 19th, Montgomery County Council voted 7-2 to override Executive Ike Leggett's veto of the stormwater capital improvement program (CIP) budget, with plans to consider a compromise replacement proposal at a July 10th public hearing. The Stormwater Partners Network of Montgomery County is a coalition of 36 local, regional, and national civic, environmental, and watershed organizations dedicated to healthy streams and watersheds. This statement is issued by the following leadership members of the Network in response to the vote: [Audubon Naturalist Society](#), [Potomac Conservancy](#), [Conservation Montgomery](#), [Friends of Sligo Creek](#), [Maryland Sierra Club](#), and [Montgomery Countryside Alliance](#).

"We thank the Councilmembers who voted to override the Executive's veto: Berliner; Elrich; Hucker; Katz; Navarro; Rice; and Riemer. By doing so, they have accomplished a number of things. They have preserved the Council's budget authority and proceeded forward with an intent to improve the Executive's earlier plan that would have reduced transparency, public accountability, and green infrastructure. That plan also would have cancelled and suspended dozens of promised stormwater projects and cut the capital budget by \$243 million over five years in the face of still-uncertain state requirements under the Clean Water Act.

"However, the veto override is not enough to maintain the progress that's necessary to better protect county residents and streams from stormwater pollution. Stormwater pollution and flooding will only get worse as the climate continues to change, so we intend to keep fighting. We are disappointed that the Council was not able to find six votes to support the Transportation & Environment Committee's proposed and approved plan to return - for the time being - to the prior system of stormwater management planning and contracting.

"Executive Leggett precipitated a governance and constitutional crisis in Montgomery County by using a line-item budget veto for the first time in 25 years without a full understanding of the legal ramifications of his decision. This decision also threatened his own stormwater program, forcing a compromise. We thank Council for seeking to improve environmental outcomes in the compromise proposal, however, the proposal essentially preserves Mr. Leggett's desired contracting model and its attendant risks, and does not return \$243 million in stormwater project funds.

So we're going to keep fighting for the best protections for local residents and look forward to fully evaluating the compromise model and submitting public testimony on July 10th."

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Audubon Naturalist Society: Throughout its 121-year history, ANS has played a pivotal role in conserving our region's iconic natural places from development including the C&O Canal, Dyke Marsh and, most recently, Ten Mile Creek. Past ANS member and board president, Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, is credited with launching the now global environmental movement. ANS's nature experts provide hundreds of opportunities each year for children and adults to enjoy, learn about, and protect the environment. www.anshome.org Follow ANS at [www.Facebook.com/AudubonNaturalistSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AudubonNaturalistSociety), [www.Twitter.com/ANStweets](https://www.twitter.com/ANStweets) and [@ANSNature](https://www.instagram.com/ANSNature) on Instagram.

Potomac Conservancy: www.potomac.org

Conservation Montgomery: www.conservationmontgomery.org

Friends of Sligo Creek: www.fosc.org/

Maryland Sierra Club: <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland>

Montgomery Countryside Alliance: www.mocoalliance.org/