

WHEREAS, Prince William County has approximately 16,000 wells and most of the mid-county and many of the western area residents of the county rely on groundwater as their sole source of water; and

WHEREAS, the Bull Run and Occoquan River watershed is highly urbanized, and urbanization is often a cause of reduced groundwater recharge; and

WHEREAS, the National Climate Assessment and many other peer-reviewed scientific studies have documented significant current and future impacts of climate change on groundwater resources; and

WHEREAS, the groundwater supply is crucial to the continuance of the entire water supply of all residents of Prince William, and necessary for protecting human health, a prime function of government; and

WHEREAS, protecting groundwater and human health is key to resilience and equity, which are key factors in the Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP); and

WHEREAS, only two active, continuously monitored groundwater wells exist in the County, and cannot provide data on current and future groundwater supply in the various watersheds in the County essential for supply; and

WHEREAS, a directive was given to staff in 2021 to investigate undertaking a groundwater study, and despite the staff's recommendations, there was no further BOCS or staff action to monitor or model groundwater;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sustainability Commission recommends that the BOCS direct county staff to develop a plan to assess groundwater supply, with capability to ensure sustainability of the water supply by identifying and managing problems related to climate change, urbanization, and other stressors. This includes both monitoring capability, such as working with the Department of Environmental Quality to add monitoring wells and stream gauge sites as needed, and modeling capability, such as moving forward with the USGS proposal to develop a Soil-Water Balance model that was attached to the November 22, 2021 Memorandum from the Director of Public Works Thomas Smith; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that due to the public health and resilience implications involved, it is recommended that providing additional groundwater monitoring and modeling capability be given a high priority for completion as quickly as possible to ensure the continued availability of water for all our residents.