

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
2019 Legislative Session

Resolution No. CR-13-2019

Proposed by Council Member Glaros

Introduced by Council Members Glaros, Anderson-Walker, Davis, Franklin, Harrison
Hawkins, Ivey, Streeter, Taveras and Turner

Date of Introduction February 19, 2019

RESOLUTION

1 A RESOLUTION concerning

2 Clean Water Act

3 Proposed Roll Back of Federal Protections

4 Under the "Waters of the United States" Rule

5 For the purpose of expressing strong opposition to the federally proposed roll back of federal
6 protections under the Clean Water Act and to forward this Resolution to Federal, State and local
7 leaders for consideration in their deliberations regarding this important issue.

8 WHEREAS, nearly half a century ago, our Nation's leaders established the Clean Water
9 Act to better protect water resources for the American people; and

10 WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act should be defended in the original spirit in which it was
11 created: to protect our waterways for the benefit of the people and natural communities that rely
12 on clean water; and

13 WHEREAS, the protections of the Clean Water Act are being threatened under a proposal
14 by the Trump Administration to roll back key clean water protections mandated by the "Waters
15 of the United States" rule. The Environmental Protection Agency has released a new definition
16 of the Waters of the United States that would give a narrower interpretation of what is a federally
17 protected body of water, leaving some watersheds, streams and wetlands without environmental
18 regulations and potentially pushing back important progress made in water quality in Prince
19 George's County; and

20 WHEREAS, the proposed roll back is currently in a public comment period, and
21 the County Council of Prince George's County, Maryland seeks to express its strong opposition
22 to the proposed Clean Water Act roll back of federal protections; and

1 WHEREAS, countless wetlands and thousands of miles of United States waterways would
2 no longer be federally protected by the Clean Water Act; and

3 WHEREAS, under the Environmental Protection Agency’s new proposal, the only wetlands
4 that will be federally protected are those that are adjacent to a major body of water or ones that
5 are connected to a major waterway by surface water, and the proposal plans to eliminate the
6 protections for ephemeral or intermittent waterways. Ephemeral streams flow only after
7 precipitation, but they constitute a major part of the country’s water systems; and

8 WHEREAS, the National Resources Defense Council has stated that the Environmental
9 Protection Agency’s new definition of the Obama-era safeguard “would allow polluters to dirty
10 our critically important streams, tributaries, and wetlands and threaten the water supply of
11 millions of Americans”; and

12 WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act gives local jurisdictions measurable goals of reducing
13 pollution and holds them accountable to achieving these goals. To this end, the Prince George’s
14 County Department of the Environment manages the run-off of pollutants, like motor oil and
15 pesticides, which flow from urban areas. As the second-most populated county in Maryland with
16 almost 60% of land occupied by residential areas, urban runoff has been a key responsibility and
17 goal for the County; and

18 WHEREAS, the County’s Clean Water Program, in response to mandates set forth by the
19 Clean Water Act, targets 8,000 acres of impervious surfaces through 2025 with \$1.2 billion in
20 funding. The program treats surfaces like parking lots, roofs and roads to help prevent pollutants
21 from flowing into the County’s bodies of water; and

22 WHEREAS, Prince George’s County is covered by 305 acres of water, including the Upper
23 Patuxent River watershed, a 28-mile segment, at the Piscataway Creek watershed, a 20.6 stream
24 mile segment and Mattawoman Creek watershed, a 18.5 stream mile watershed, all of which are
25 included in the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed. According to the Chesapeake Bay
26 Foundation’s statement about the EPA’s proposed definition change, “the revised definition
27 could [also] prevent states with more strict protections, such as Maryland, from holding upstream
28 states accountable for water pollution they allow to cross state lines”; and

29 WHEREAS, the Anacostia Watershed Society has advocated towards making the Anacostia
30 River, an 8.7-mile river flowing from Prince George’s County, swimmable and fishable by 2025.
31 In 2018, the Anacostia River received a passing grade on the State of the Anacostia River Report

1 Card for the first time. The River showed improvement in indicators such as water clarity,
2 submerged aquatic vegetation and stormwater runoff volume thanks to the collaborative efforts
3 of local government, and environmental and community groups. The Anacostia Watershed
4 Society specifically credited Prince George’s County in 2017 for its effort to reduce the amount
5 of trash as a factor in achieving this passing grade.

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Prince George's
7 County, Maryland, that the County Council declares its strong opposition to the proposed roll
8 back of federal protections under the Clean Water Act.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Council shall be directed to forward a
10 copy of this Resolution to the President of the United States, Acting Administrator of the
11 Environmental Protection Agency, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the
12 Maryland members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the Governor, the
13 Secretary of the Maryland Department of Environment, the Speaker of the House, the President
14 of the Senate, the Chair of the Prince George’s County Senate Delegation, the Chair of the Prince
15 George’s County House Delegation, the County Executive of Prince George’s County and the
16 Director of the Prince George’s County Department of the Environment.

Adopted this 26th day of March , 2019.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE
GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: _____
Todd M. Turner
Chair

ATTEST:

Redis C. Floyd
Clerk of the Council