



Testimony of Barbara Miller  
On Behalf of the Advocates for Herring Bay  
Regarding Bills 16-15 and 17-15  
Ordinances Concerning the Stormwater Remediation Fee  
April 6, 2015

Clean, swimmable water is the lifeblood of Herring Bay, with its nearly 2,000 recreational boats, its charter fishing operations, and its crabbers and other watermen.

For Herring Bay to continue to thrive, the county needs to fix the hundreds of outfalls, ponds, and streams in the watersheds north of us. Sediments from those rivers flow south and are deposited along our shores. Completing the \$400 million portfolio of projects planned by 2019 will improve the water quality in Herring Bay, bring the county into compliance with federal and state laws, and lower the cost of the county's dredging program.

Enacting either of these bills would derail that progress. Your auditor and budget officer have made clear that the county's operating budget cannot absorb that \$400 million cost without making steep cuts in other programs. Issuing general obligation bonds would jeopardize the county's credit rating and raise interest expenses. There simply is no credible Plan B.

Preserving the county's waterways and its 500 miles of shoreline requires making large investments now. The current fees guarantee funding for essential stormwater projects and they do so in a way that balances the costs between commercial and residential taxpayers. We oppose repealing those fees, especially in the absence of alternatives that would provide an equally secure and sufficient amount of money.

We urge you to vote against Bills 16 -15 and 17-15.