



Notes from the Chair

By Rick Keller

It looks like 2019 will be a busy year for local environmental activists—and we encourage you to get involved! Your [new Executive Committee](#) met January 27th to plan the Mount Vernon Group's initiatives for 2019.

Work on the [Ready for 100](#) campaigns in Arlington and the City of Alexandria will continue (100% renewable energy for electricity by 2035, across all sectors by 2050). Arlington is updating its Community Energy Plan and we will push to have it include our renewable energy goals. Alexandria is working to update its Green Building Policy and we will be working to make it as energy efficient as possible.

Transportation, especially the promotion of electric vehicles (EVs), will be another focus. The Volkswagen settlement will bring money to local jurisdictions for use in installing charging stations and perhaps investing in government EVs. We are especially focused on EV school buses. They have a lot of upsides, from operating efficiencies to air quality, but cost is a factor. Looking for ways to mitigate those upfront costs in exchange for longer-term savings will be one of the areas of investigation.

Fairfax County (our area includes the eastern portion) is facing a major election for the Board of Supervisors. We will be working with the Great Falls Group to coordinate the endorsement process as districts are split between the two Groups. See the article elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter for more information on this.

The decision of Amazon to establish "HQ2" in Arlington's Crystal City and Pentagon City areas also portends a certain amount of local work. We are generally supportive of the decision as it will mean benefits to the two jurisdictions in terms of enabling plans to go forward that might not have otherwise and will bring needed funds to affordable housing initiatives. In the short term we will be watching the performance agreement that Arlington will sign with Amazon to see what input might be possible. A more in depth look at what HQ2 means to the Group region will be part of the next newsletter.

Zero waste will again be an initiative we support, and we will continue to promote net zero and zero carbon buildings and development in public schools, government facilities, and the community.

I would like to welcome Paul Kaplowitz and Barbara Swart to the committee. Both have been involved in the Ready100 campaign for the last few years. Four of the nine ExCom positions have now changed hands over the last four years, a positive way to get new ideas and leadership in the Club. Of course, leadership is not limited to ExCom members. I myself started taking an active role before becoming an ExCom member. We always welcome people who are willing to get involved and take on issues. You can view the current line-up on our website, <https://www.sierraclub.org/virginia/mount-vernon/about-us>.

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