



Sierra Club Endorses Winners in Local Elections

by Dean Amel

Last month's elections yielded excellent results for those candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club in northern Virginia. In Fairfax County, nine of ten endorsed candidates for the Board of Supervisors won election and, in Arlington County, both endorsed candidates won the two contested slots on the County Board. In addition, every incumbent endorsed for the General Assembly won reelection and the only challenger to be endorsed defeated the incumbent he opposed.

The Sierra Club endorsed Jeff McKay in both the Democratic primary and the general election for chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. McKay's victory, succeeding the retiring Sharon Bulova, gives us a chair who was a champion on environmental issues when he served as a supervisor from the Lee District. We look forward to Mr. McKay moving Fairfax forward more rapidly on its transition to renewable energy and to meeting other green goals.

Other Board of Supervisors candidates with Sierra Club endorsements who won election in the fall are James Walkinshaw (Braddock District), Walter Alcorn (Hunter Mill), John Foust (Dranesville), Rodney Lusk (Lee), Penny Gross (Mason), Dan Storck (Mount Vernon), Dalia Palchik (Providence) and Kathy Smith (Sully). The only Fairfax candidate endorsed by the Club who did not win was Linda Sperling (Springfield). Ms. Sperling got 49.4 percent of the vote despite being greatly outspent by incumbent Pat Herrity. With four new faces on the Board of Supervisors (Alcorn, Lusk, Palchik and Walkinshaw), these election results present environmentalists with a great opportunity to accelerate the rate of positive change in Fairfax County.

In Arlington, endorsed candidates Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey won reelection easily. Ms. Cristol and Mr. Dorsey were endorsed based on their record on environmental issues, including this year's update to the Community Energy Plan, which commits the County to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, with important interim goals.

Most incumbents in the state House of Delegates and Senate from the Mount Vernon Group's territory were endorsed and reelected. The only endorsed challenger whose district overlaps with our group's territory is Dan Helmer. Mr. Helmer defeated incumbent Tim Hugo, possibly the most anti-environment state legislator from northern Virginia. Results from the rest of the

state were equally positive, and both the House of Delegates and the Senate now contain pro-environment majorities.

The Sierra Club and other green groups will work in Richmond to pass environmental initiatives that encourage renewable energy, oppose unneeded and expensive natural-gas pipelines and allow more leeway for localities to adopt new environmental statutes on issues like solid waste, transportation and energy. We must make sure that these issues are not lost in the flood of worthy legislative initiatives related to guns, women's and LGBTQ rights and many other issues. If you would like to work on these issues, please contact group Political Chair Dean Amel at damel@alum.mit.edu.

This content originally appeared in the December 2019 issue of the Mount Vernon Sierran, the Mount Vernon Group's quarterly newsletter. For more information about the Mount Vernon Group, please visit virginia.sierraclub.org/mvg/.