



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER  
COUNCILMEMBER  
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN  
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

January 14, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Next week I will be introducing a package of 13 energy/environmental measures that are designed to ensure that Montgomery County remains at the sustainability forefront. I would be pleased to have you cosponsor some or all of these measures.

These measures focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation, and government accountability. I have attached a fact sheet that gives a brief description of each of them, and of course would be happy to discuss any of them in greater detail should you have questions.

I was inspired by our Council's decision to assert its leadership in the context of reducing the gap in income disparities by passing a local minimum wage law. I think all of us appreciate that the federal government has become so dysfunctional that we can expect little progress on many of the issues we care deeply about. Indeed, Bruce Katz of Brookings recently described the federal government as a "large health insurance company with an army." His thesis, which I share, is that our governing paradigm has shifted from a top down led by the federal government to a bottom up led by local governments like ours.

I say all of this because we need to do more if we are to address climate change. It is obviously not a hoax and we know what we need to do to address it. We need to use less energy and cleaner energy. Period. This package of bills is taken in many instances from what other leading jurisdictions are doing – from Chicago to Seattle to California and New York states. They are a mix of leading by example, rewarding green businesses, supporting market forces, adopting more exacting standards, and holding our county government accountable.

Holding ourselves accountable is important. When the Council passed a similar package in 2008, we tasked a Sustainability Working Group with the principal responsibility for guiding our County to achieve our formal goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050. It is time now to make this a core government

responsibility, and this package includes a measure that will create an Office of Sustainability within DEP whose principal responsibility will be to monitor how we are doing and to help develop the policies and practices that will get us to where we need to be.

I hope you will join me in making sure Montgomery County burnishes its reputation as a community that embraces sustainability at our core.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'B.C.' followed by a horizontal flourish.