MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject	**Number**
Water Quality Protection Charge	10-13
Originating Department	**Effective Date**
Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Finance	December 3, 2013

Montgomery County Regulation on:

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION CHARGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Issued by: County Executive
Regulation No. 10-13
COMCOR No. 19.35.01

Authority: Code Section 19-35
Supersedes: Executive Regulation 17-12AM
Council Review: Method (1) under Code Section 2A-15
Register Vol. 30 No. 6

Comment Deadline: June 30, 2013
Effective Date: December 3, 2013
Sunset Date: None

Summary: This regulation amends Executive Regulation 17-12AM, which establishes the procedures for applying the Water Quality Protection Charge to certain properties and the criteria by which certain property owners qualify for a financial hardship exemption.

Address: Written comments on these regulations should be sent to:

Vicky Wan
Division of Watershed Management
Department of Environmental Protection
255 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Staff Contact: For further information or to obtain a copy of this regulation, contact Vicky Wan at (240) 777-7722.

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Subject Water Quality Protection Charge	**Number** 10-13
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Section 1. General Provisions

A. Authority. In accordance with the authority conferred under Chapter 19, Section 19-35, of the Montgomery County Code, 2004, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Code"), the County Executive hereby promulgates this regulation for the purpose of implementing the County's Water Quality Protection Charge as set forth in Chapter 19 of the Code.

B. Applicability. This regulation applies to all owners of residential property and nonresidential property in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Section 2. Definitions

The definitions of the terms used in this regulation are provided in Chapter 19, Section 19-21, of the Code. For purposes of this regulation, the following additional words and phrases will have the meaning respectively ascribed to them in this regulation unless the context indicates otherwise:

Agricultural Property means a property that is used primarily for agriculture, viticulture, aquaculture, silviculture, horticulture, or livestock and equine activities; temporary or seasonal outdoor activities that do not permanently alter the property's physical appearance and that do not diminish the property's rural character; or activities that are intrinsically related to the ongoing agricultural enterprise on the property.

Base Rate means the annually designated dollar amount set by the County Council to be assessed for each equivalent residential unit of property that is subject to the Water Quality Protection Charge.

Condominium means a property that is subject to the condominium regime established under the Maryland Condominium Act.

Director means the Director of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection or the Director's designee.

Eligible Nonprofit Property means real property owned by a nonprofit organization that is exempt from *ad valorem* property taxes under State law.

Equivalent Residential Unit or ERU means the statistical median of the total horizontal impervious area of developed single family detached residences in the County that serves as the base unit of assessment for the Water Quality Protection Charge. The designated ERU for Montgomery County equals 2,406 square feet of impervious surface.

Multifamily Residential Property means a mobile home park or a residential building where one or more dwelling units share a common entrance from the outside with other dwelling units that are arranged above, below or next to one another in the same building, and any housing unit that is subject to the condominium regime established under the Maryland Condominium Act.

Parking Lot means any area that is intended for parking of motor vehicles.

Water Quality Protection Charge or Charge means an assessment levied by the Director of Finance to cover the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining facilities within the County's stormwater management system and fund related expenses allowed under applicable state law based on the impact of stormwater runoff from the impervious areas of developed land in the County.

Section 3. Classification of Properties

For purposes of determining the appropriate assessment rate, all properties that are subject to the Water Quality Protection Charge are assigned to one of the following classifications:

A. Single Family Residential Tier 1 (SFR1): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is less than or equal to 1,000 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

B. Single Family Residential Tier 2 (SFR2): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 1,000 square feet and less than or equal to 1,410 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

C. Single Family Residential Tier 3 (SFR3): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 1,410 square feet and less than or equal to 3,412 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

D. Single Family Residential Tier 4 (SFR4): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 3,412 square feet and less than or equal to 3,810 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

E. Single Family Residential Tier 5 (SFR5): For single family residential properties where the

estimated total impervious area is greater than 3,810 square feet and less than or equal to 5,815 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

F. Single Family Residential Tier 6 (SFR6): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 5,815 square feet and less than or equal to 6,215 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

G. Single Family Residential Tier 7 (SFR7): For single family residential properties where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 6,215 square feet and includes the house, driveways, sidewalks, sheds, and any other fixtures on the property that are impenetrable by water.

H. Multifamily residential property: For multifamily residential properties the impervious area includes the residential structures that contain the dwelling units, the sidewalks, parking lots and any other permanent installations on the developed parcel, whether under single or common ownership, that is impenetrable by water.

I. Nonresidential property: Nonresidential properties may include commercial properties such as office buildings, hotels, retail establishments or industrial properties such as factories and warehouses. Nonresidential properties may also include properties owned by homeowner associations, nonprofit organizations such as religious institutions, healthcare facilities, other developed properties devoted to non-governmental charitable and institutional uses, and any government-owned properties subject to the Charge. The impervious area for these properties includes all buildings, parking lots, sidewalks, and any other impermeable installations permanently attached to the land parcel containing those installations.

J. Nonprofit Tier 1 (NP1): For properties owned by nonprofit organizations where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 0 square feet and less than or equal to 6,910 square feet and includes all buildings, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and any other impermeable installations permanently attached to the land parcel containing those installations.

K. Nonprofit Tier 2 (NP2): For properties owned by nonprofit organizations where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 6,910 square feet and less than or equal to 54,455 square feet and includes all buildings, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and any other impermeable installations permanently attached to the land parcel containing those installations.

L. Nonprofit Tier 3 (NP3): For properties owned by nonprofit organizations where the estimated total impervious area is greater than 54,455 square feet and includes all buildings, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and any other impermeable installations permanently attached to the land parcel containing those installations.

M. Agricultural property: The impervious area for agricultural properties only includes the houses on those properties.

Section 4. Rates

A. Single family residential properties: The Charge for each single family residential property is based on a percent of the base rate for one ERU in accordance with its assigned tier classification as follows:

(1) Single Family Residential Tier 1 (SFR1): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 1 property is 33 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(2) Single Family Residential Tier 2 (SFR2): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 2 property is 50 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(3) Single Family Residential Tier 3 (SFR3): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 3 property is 100 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(4) Single Family Residential Tier 4 (SFR4): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 4 property is 150 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(5) Single Family Residential Tier 5 (SFR5): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 5 property is 200 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(6) Single Family Residential Tier 6 (SFR6): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 6 property is 250 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(7) Single Family Residential Tier 7 (SFR7): The Charge for each Single Family Residential Tier 7 property is 300 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

B. Multifamily residential properties: The Charge for each multifamily residential property is based on the number of ERUs assigned to the property in accordance with the following procedure:

(1) The Director determines the number of ERUs for a multifamily residential property by dividing the property's actual impervious area by the designated ERU for Montgomery County.

(2) The Director computes the billable Charge by multiplying the base rate by the total number of ERUs assigned to the property.

(3) If the multifamily residential property is a condominium development, the Director calculates the Charge to be billed in equal shares to the owners of the development by dividing the total ERUs calculated for the property by the number of individual condominium units and then multiplying the sum by the base rate to determine the amount billable to each unit owner.

C. Nonresidential properties: The Charge for each nonresidential property is based on the number of ERUs assigned to the property in accordance with the following procedure:

(1) The Director determines the number of ERUs for a nonresidential property by dividing the property's actual impervious area by the designated ERU for Montgomery County.

(2) The Director computes the billable Charge by multiplying the base rate by the total number of ERUs assigned to the property.

(3) If the nonresidential property is a condominium development, the Director calculates the Charge to be billed in equal shares to the owners of the development by dividing the total ERUs calculated for the property by the number of individual condominium units and the multiplying the sum by the base rate to determine the amount billable to each unit owner.

D. Nonprofit properties: The Charge for eligible nonprofit property must not exceed the percent of the base rate for one ERU in accordance with the assigned tier classification as follows:

(1) Nonprofit Tier 1 (NP1): The Charge for each nonprofit property is based on its total impervious area up to 150 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(2) Nonprofit Tier 2 (NP2): The Charge for each nonprofit property is based on its total impervious area up to 900 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

(3) Nonprofit Tier 3 (NP3): The Charge for each nonprofit property is based on its total impervious area up to 2,300 percent of the applicable base rate for one ERU.

E. Agricultural properties: The Charge for each agricultural property is based on a percent of the base rate for one ERU in accordance with the applicable Single Family Residential Tier.

Section 5. Credits

A. The Director must award a maximum credit of 50 percent, based on the volume of water treated by a combination of environmental site design and other stormwater management systems, or a maximum of 60 percent, based on the volume of water completely treated by environmental site design practices alone, as specified in the application provided to a nonresidential or multifamily residential property owner if the property contains a County approved stormwater management system and the system is maintained in accordance with the maintenance requirements of the Department of Environmental Protection. A property must be credited for treatment of off-site drainage from other properties located within the same drainage area as that property. A property that does not contain a stormwater management system must be credited if located within the same drainage area as another property that contains a stormwater management system if both properties have the same owner. However, a property owner must not receive a credit based on a calculation that exceeds the total impervious area on the property for which the credit is issued.

B. The Director must award a maximum credit of 50 percent based on the volume of water treated as specified in the application provided by the Department to the owner of a single family residential property if the property contains a County approved stormwater management system and the system is maintained in accordance with the maintenance requirements of the Department of Environmental Protection.

C. Application Schedule

(1) To receive the credit, the property owner must apply to the Director of Environmental Protection in a form prescribed by the Director not later than October 31 of the year before payment of the Charge is due.

(2) Once approved, the credit is valid for three years. To renew the credit, the Property owner must reapply to the Director in a form prescribed by the Director not later than October 31 of the year before payment of the Charge is due.

D. Appeals

(1) If the Director denies the credit, the property owner may seek reconsideration of the

Director's decision by submitting a written request for reconsideration with supporting reasons to the Director within 10 days after the date of the Director's written decision.

(2) If the Director does not approve the request for reconsideration, the property owner may appeal the Director's final decision within 10 days after the Director issues that decision as provided in Chapter 2A, Article I, of the County Code.

Section 6. Billing and Payment

A. The Director must prepare and forward to the Director of Finance the necessary data for collecting the Water Quality Protection Charge from owners of property subject to the Charge. The data must identify every parcel to be charged and include the amount of the Charge. If requested by the owner using the review and adjustment process outlined in Section 7, the Director may consolidate under a single parcel any contiguous parcels owned by the same legal owner. If the Director combines two or more parcels consisting individually of at least one residential parcel and at least one nonresidential parcel, the Director must, for purposes of calculating the Water Quality Protection Charge, treat the consolidated parcel as nonresidential property.

B. The Director of Finance must include the Charge as a separate line item on the real estate tax bill for each property subject to the Charge.

C. The Director of Finance must deposit all payments collected under this Section into a County stormwater management fund.

D. Interest on any overdue payment accrues according to the same schedule and at the same rate charged for delinquent real property taxes until the owner has remitted the outstanding payment and interest. An unpaid Charge is subject to all penalties and remedies that apply to unpaid real property taxes. Any delinquent Charge is a lien against the property. The lien has the same priority as a lien imposed for nonpayment of real property taxes. The Charge must be collected in the same manner as real property taxes.

Section 7. Requests for Adjustment; Appeals

A. A property owner may request a review and adjustment of the Charge by petitioning the Director in writing, not later than September 30 of the year that payment of the Charge is due if the property owner believes that the Charge has been assigned or calculated incorrectly.

B. When submitting a petition for review of the Charge, the property owner must include a detailed statement of the basis for the petition and documents supporting the property owner's assertion that the property should be assigned to a different classification, the impervious area measurements used to calculate the ERUs for the property are incorrect, or the property is not subject to the Charge under applicable law.

C. Within 60 days after receiving the petition, the Director must review the Charge assigned to the property and make a written determination of whether the property owner's request for an adjustment of the Charge should be granted or denied. The Director may request additional information from the property owner that the Director reasonably believes will help the Director decide whether the property owner is entitled to an adjustment.

D. If the Director concludes that the Charge was levied by mistake or resulted from an inaccurate computation, the Director must submit the corrected data to the Department of Finance with a request for an adjustment to the property owner's bill. After receiving the Director's request, the Director of Finance must make an appropriate adjustment based on the new data submitted by the Director and refund any overpayment to the property owner.

E. If the Director concludes that some or all of the requested adjustment should be denied, the property owner may seek reconsideration of the Director's conclusion by submitting a written request for reconsideration with supporting reasons to the Director within 10 days after the date of the Director's written decision.

F. If the Director does not approve the request for reconsideration, the property owner may appeal the Director's final decision within 10 days after the Director issues that decision as provided in Chapter 2A, Article I, of the County Code.

G. The County Board of Appeals is the designated authority charged with hearing and deciding all appeals taken from the Director's final decision to deny any relief requested under this regulation.

Section 8. Requests for Exemption

A. Before paying the Charge, the owner of residential property that is owner-occupied, or a nonprofit organization that owns property subject to the Charge, may apply for a financial hardship exemption from the Charge by submitting a written request to the Director of Finance in a form prescribed by the Director not later than April 1 of the year when payment of the Charge is due.

B. (1) To qualify for the exemption, the request submitted by an owner-occupant of residential property must be accompanied by a copy of the owner-occupant's income tax returns indicating that the property owner's gross household income did not exceed 170 percent of the poverty guidelines published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the year before payment of the Charge is due or verification that the property owner meets eligibility criteria for receiving benefits under the Maryland Energy Assistance Program for the year that payment of the Charge is due.

(2) The request submitted by a nonprofit organization must be accompanied by the organization's most recent federal tax return or other verification of total revenues derived from the property for which the exemption is sought, as required by the Director of Finance. To qualify for a partial exemption: (i) the amount of the Charge must exceed 0.2% of the organization's total revenues from the property for which the exemption is sought for the year before payment of the Charge is due; and (ii) the property for which the exemption is sought must be exempt from real property *ad valorem* taxation under State law. The amount of the partial exemption is the amount of the Charge that exceeds 0.2 percent of the nonprofit's total revenues derived from the property.

C. The Director of Finance must issue a written decision to grant or deny the exemption within 30 days after receiving the request.

D. Any exemption granted under this Section is only valid for the year that payment of the Charge is due.

E. If the Director of Finance denies the exemption, the property owner may seek reconsideration of the Director's decision by submitting a written request for reconsideration with supporting reasons to the Director within 10 days after the date of the Director's written decision.

F. If the Director of Finance does not approve the request for reconsideration, the property owner may appeal the Director's final decision within 10 days after the Director issues that decision as provided in Chapter 2A, Article I, of the County Code.

Section 9. Requests for Grants

A homeowners' association may apply for a grant to offset all or part of the cost of the Charge for any private maintenance road, as defined in Section 24B.00.02.02 of the Code of Montgomery County Regulations, which is eligible for State highway user revenues, not including any parking lot, by submitting a written application to the Director in a form prescribed by the Director not later than

September 30 of the year that payment of the Charge is due.

Section 10. Severability

If a court holds that a portion of this regulation is invalid, the other portions remain in effect.

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Approved as to Form and Legality
Office of County Attorney
By _____
Date 11/12/13
Walter E. Wilson