



## Stormwater management: Projects need oversight for most benefit

Our county, along with others in Maryland, is required to minimize polluted runoff from rain that ends up in the Chesapeake Bay. This is done using various technologies, including dry wells, grass drainage swales, green roofs, ponds, rain barrels and porous pavement.

This spring, the county executive proposed in our six-year capital budget a radical overhaul of how we manage these projects. His proposal could have resulted in having only a small handful of contractors managing the projects, from designing and building to maintaining them.

Most of us on the County Council — and many community environmentalists — were concerned that these contractors would be able to cherry-pick which projects to work on, and would choose the “low-hanging fruit”: those projects most profitable to them, regardless of their environmental benefit.

We successfully blocked this proposal and overrode the executive’s line-item veto of our own plan.

Our proposal will do the following:

- Significantly scale back the size of the executive's contracting approach. Then we can see how well it works and if it's how we should proceed in the future.
- Proceed with about a dozen projects that are already well along in the design stage.
- Ensure that at least 60 percent of the projects involve "green" infrastructure, such as swales, green roofs and reforestation, versus "gray" infrastructure — concrete and steel projects.
- Provide for greater transparency and citizen oversight of the stormwater management process.

A public hearing on our proposal is scheduled for July 10 at 1:30 p.m.

More information is here: <https://bit.ly/2MEZ5CQ> and <https://bit.ly/2lhzwG>.