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Testimony to the Planning Board on Pulte “Creekside at Cabin Branch Development - December 3, 2020

Good morning. I am Caroline Taylor testifying on behalf of Montgomery Countryside Alliance. We support the testimony of Friends of Ten Mile Creek and other colleagues who are providing the board compelling science and public policy based rationale to warrant returning to staff this development plan to address shortcomings. These deficiencies would promote the degradation of still high quality Ten Mile Creek and its terminus, Little Seneca Reservoir, which serves the residents of our region by augmenting low flows in the Potomac River – which in turn supplies, on average, just over $\frac{3}{4}$ of our region’s water needs.

Noted water research scientist, Dr. Ahmed Kettab declared in April of this year that “Water for everyone is everyone’s business.” He and other world scientist were responding to dire climate change forecasts that predict that by 2030 water scarcity will affect 40% of the world’s populace. Currently 25% of global population is in severe water stress. By 2050 demand for water will increase by 40%.

What does this have to do with us? *Plenty*. In September of this year the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, ICPRB, released its report: [Demand and Resource Availability for the Year 2050](#). It is a sobering read [that details the potential impact of climate change](#) and increased water demand on the Washington Metropolitan Area water supply. It was conducted on behalf of the Fairfax County Water Authority, WSSC and the US Army Corps of Engineers, Water Aqueduct Division. For more details on the ICPRB I point the Board to testimony submitted by Scott Fosler. You see, the ICPRB has known for some time that our region’s water supply will be faced with significant challenges in meeting demand during projected periods of drought. They are diligently working to address this. The System of existing reservoirs will be called to use more frequently and will not provide enough water in times of stress and so 4 new proposed reservoirs are in the works:

[Travilah Quarry in Potomac](#) and Luck Stone Quarry B in Loudon County and the Vulcan and Milston Quarries

The ICPRB reports warns that even with the addition of these new quarries which will add 13 billion gallons of water storage capacity, coupled with water restrictions and demand management we may not be able to meet our water needs during the predicted future periods of extreme drought. The report also warns that without the addition of the 7.8 million gallon Travilah Quarry the WMA may experience periodic failures by 2040. I will provide the report with my testimony.

The report forecasts that our region as a whole will be wetter due to a changing climate however, it also points to extremes in weather including periods of prolonged drought. In either case: more extreme water events or drought our land use decisions must account for the effects of these changes. This is not business as usual. The Commission has no obligation to granting full development potential to applicants and every obligation to properly steward our irreplaceable water resources.

