Letter to Governor Youngkin

January 21, 2022

Governor Youngkin,

Congratulations on your inauguration as Governor. The Friends of Accotink Creek would like to offer some thoughts.

Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint - Your current term of office will last through 2025. This is also the year the Chesapeake Bay states agreed to meet pollution reduction targets under the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. Virginia must significantly accelerate pollution reduction to meet those targets. Failure will invite EPA takeover of permitting authority or other consequences (not to mention the primary consequence of an unhealthy and unproductive Chesapeake Bay).

Climate Change - Climate change is real. It does not care about our expectations or inconveniences. Please do not be the governor who takes Virginia (and the world with us) backward on this most pressing priority of our times. Please do not pull Virginia out of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or repeal the Virginia Clean Economy Act.

Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources - Likewise, please reconsider the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to be our Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources. Mr. Wheeler is not the individual you need to help lead the Commonwealth to a better future.

Deforestation - As a watershed group, deforestation is the most immediate climate change issue for us. At the Glasgow Climate Change Conference world leaders issued the stirring declaration "*We therefore commit to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss*". The world cannot make good on that pledge if we here cannot. Even minor loss of forest cover here and there adds up to significant cumulative effect. We urge you to lead the Commonwealth to adopt a course of prevention of deforestation large and small.

Education – Virginia needs to educate students of today to make the decisions of the future. That future is theirs. Education is not isolated within school lessons. Students will be molded by the example we provide for them in our fulfillment of our present trust for the preservation of this earth.

“Dominion over nature is a gift which has been given us yoked to the trust for its preservation."

Friends of Accotink Creek

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