

NAACP

Arlington Branch

November 15, 2023

Debbie Messmer
Deputy Director Grants Management and Recovery, Financial Management Bureau
Virginia Department of Emergency Management
9711 Farrar Court
North Chesterfield, VA 23236

Dear Ms. Messmer,

I am writing to express support from the NAACP Arlington Environmental and Climate Justice Committee for Arlington County's Microgrid Feasibility Study Project Scoping sub-application under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. Ensuring energy reliability and security for our critical facilities, resiliency hubs, and vulnerable community service sites is most important during and immediately following disaster events when widespread power outages have and will continue to occur. This sub-application, which is aimed at fortifying energy supply and distribution for facilities that serve our most at-risk communities, represents a critical step towards achieving long-term resiliency.

The NAACP Arlington Environmental and Climate Justice Committee has a vested interest in the funding and success of this project scoping activity. Arlington encompasses several census tracts for high social vulnerability under the EPA EJ Screen and CEJST tools. Among these communities, life expectancy can be as much as 11 years shorter than their counterparts in Arlington's affluent neighborhoods. And, similar to national trends, these populations face acute disadvantages in extreme events and power outages, including but not limited to childcare, medical and physical support for the chronically-ill or disabled, familial comfort and safety, and even the ability to maintain communications crucial to securing aid and support. We place priority value on systems and strategies that ensure timely, effective delivery of those services and operations and, importantly, mitigate risk, loss and safety threats among vulnerable populations. Therefore, evaluating and identifying cost-effective and technically feasible mitigation solutions to reduce the impacts of energy emergencies on our critical facilities will generate significant benefits for all and, perhaps especially, for our most vulnerable residents.

The NAACP Arlington Environmental and Climate Justice Committee supports the County's investment in energy sustainability, efficiency, and equity and, therefore, we give our support for the funding of the Microgrid Feasibility Study Project Scoping sub-application under the FY 2023 BRIC program. Please keep us informed of next steps and how we can further engage as a partner and stakeholder.

Sincerely,



Michael Hemminger
President, NAACP Arlington Branch

c: NAACP Arlington Branch Executive Committee