

February 20, 2026
RE: Performance Oversight Hearing
Committee on Transportation & the Environment



To Councilmember Allen and the Committee on Transportation and the Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to testify for the Department of Public Works (DPW) oversight hearing. My name is Jamoni Overby, and I am the District of Columbia Conservation Advocate for Nature Forward, an organization of more than 28,000 members and supporters, that has been helping residents of the DMV enjoy, learn about, and protect nature for 129 years. Our Conservation priorities are human health & access to nature; biodiversity & habitat; fighting the climate crisis; and sustainable land use. The urgency of the climate crisis is evident across our country today, and that urgency underscores the importance of hearings like this one.

As I discuss some of the following priorities, none of my concerns are independently environmental issues, but a matter of intersectional justice that requires interagency coordination and collaboration to address priorities, funding, resource allocation, capacity and equity amongst programs and pending bills and new initiatives. This city needs cohesion amongst our agencies for impactful progress to be made.

Considering severe environmental concerns, Nature Forward urges DOEE to address the following priorities:

1. **Pass the Cumulative Impacts Analysis Amendment Act of 2025**

- Bill 26-104 would establish a “cumulative impact statement” process that must be completed to obtain District permits and other relief for environmentally harmful actions in overburdened communities. It would also establish a “modified cumulative impact statement” to assess District agency plans that impact the siting of significant sources of environmental harm in overburdened communities and it would create accountability to ensure that these processes are enforceable and result



in meaningful progress for overburdened communities. It also establishes an environmental justice division at DOEE.

- Thank you, Councilmember Zachary Parker's introduction a crucial piece of environmental justice legislation, the Cumulative Impact Analysis Amendment Act of 2025. Nature Forward requests that the committee and Council move forward with this legislation. There is a huge lack of transparency and public insight on permitting and impact companies will have on the environment and public health of DC residents. This legislation is a matter of taking action against facilities and infrastructure who continue to target Wards 5, 7 and 8 as sacrifice zones.

2. **Passage of the Recycling Refund Amendment Act of 2025**

- Even with regularly coordinated clean ups, community groups cannot keep up with the litter that plagues our city. A bottle bill will take a communal approach to solving this issue and protecting our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Nature Forward along with other organizations have come together to create the Return, Refund and Recycle Coalition also known as 3RC for DC. Together the coalition has engaged with District residents on this issue and have heard recollections of collecting bottles for candy money back in the day, input on how to design a bill that is accessible and will highlight the beauty in their neighborhoods, create green jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities.

We count on the Council to support a strong and equitable bottle bill as introduced that addresses intersectional issues of community involvement, care for the environment, job creation, and cutting recycling costs in the District.

3. **Cross agency coordination and transparency on the Post Potomac Interceptor pipe collapse Remediation:**

- On January 19, 2026, the Potomac Interceptor pipe collapse contaminated the Potomac River with 300+ million gallons of raw sewage, making the water unsafe to touch. Nature Forward asks for DC Water's full transparency by providing regular and detailed updates



about the ongoing contamination and efficacy of containment measures. In collaboration with DC Water, DOEE should conduct a comprehensive environmental impact assessment and conduct restoration to address harm to the C&O Canal and Potomac River and be held accountable. A thorough investigation of the cause of the disaster to fix other known weak points in the system that is published with full results to ensure this never happens again is needed so DC can continue to make progress in our waterways.

4. **Restored Funding for Stormwater Infrastructure & Maintenance:**

- Last year during the FY26 budget season, DC's leading environmental agency, DOEE took a major cut to funding for water quality, stormwater and green infrastructure maintenance projects in the District. Many of these programs that benefit residents and our youth were cut or completely disregarded. Nature Forward will continue to advocate for restored funding and additional funding for these community and youth education programs that address environmental and public health.

5. **Development that Protects the Anacostia Floodplain:**

- There is a lot of excitement surrounding the Redevelopment of RFK stadium. With its proximity to the Anacostia River, there are also many concerns. The Anacostia floodplain supports diverse ecosystems, including wetlands, riparian forests, and unique wildlife habitats. It acts as a natural sponge, storing excess water during flood events and slowly releasing it, which helps reduce flood impacts in the communities in and surrounding Kingman & Heritage Island. Many residents in DC already experience inland flooding from heavy storms which impact the health of their homes and presents financial burdens post-flooding. Nature Forward asks for transparency, an Environmental Impact Statement and cross collaboration with DOEE and developers for The RFK campus to be designed to not contribute to flooding potential, and incorporate effective flood prevention along the Anacostia River.
- Along with development that protects the Anacostia River, we ask for restored funding and prioritization to protect families and communities



from flooding along the Anacostia River and in other floodprone areas in the District. As we know, due to climate change, weather events are more severe and more residents inland are experiencing flooding in their homes. DOEE funded programs such as FloodSmart Homes, RiverSmart Communities, RiverSmart Schools and RiverSmart Homes have been underfunded from the FY26 budget. Many households are on the waiting list seeking support to help protect their homes from flooding. Nature Forward's Building Flood Wise Communities Program, funded by DC DOEE in 2024, reached more than 900 residents and youth in DC about the importance of protecting their homes. These programs provide solutions and preventative measures for families that could otherwise spend up to \$20,000 on repairs after flood damage.

6. **Sustainable Energy Trust Fund (SETF):** Nature Forward will advocate to protect funding in the Sustainable Energy Trust Fund. This fund helps reduce CO2 emissions from DC homes by subsidizing electrification retrofits for 30,000 low to moderate-income families. Last year, this program's funding was almost wiped out in order to finance other programs that do not support CO2 emission reductions. Nature Forward will fight for funding to this program to be maintained if not increased as it supports the District's Climate Commitments to transition off fossil fuel energy. When we think about intersectional issues, the Healthy Homes Act is an excellent example of how to approach a matter of economic, housing, health, and environmental justice.

I urge the Committee on Transportation & Environment to act swiftly on these initiatives and ensure that environmental justice remains at the forefront of our city's public works agenda.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you need any additional information or have questions, please contact me at jamoni.overby@natureforward.org.

With appreciation,

Jamoni Overby

DC Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward

