

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 1, 2018

To: EAB Members and Ex Officio Members

Subject: Explanation of Proposed EAB Structure Change

The EAB proposes to amend the Inter-local Agreement between the City Council and County Commission regarding the structure of the Environmental Affairs Board (EAB) in 2010 in order to:

1. Expand the size of the Board
2. Add an Equity/Environmental Justice seat (appointed by the Durham City Council)
3. Add three At-Large seats to the Board (one seat appointed by the Durham City Council, two seats appointed by the Durham County Board of Commissioners)

First, we believe that increasing the size of the EAB will give the board more capacity to address the range of challenges Durham is facing. Durham Boards and Commissions range in size, from one to more than thirty members, and commissions with similarly broad mandates range from fifteen to thirty members. The EAB proposes to increase our size from eleven to fifteen members. The EAB has an ambitious set of priorities, and with more capacity we will be able to better partner with staff, support elected officials, and serve Durham.

Second, we believe the addition of an Equity/Environmental Justice seat is an important step for the EAB. A healthy and vibrant environment is important for us all, but people of color and low-income communities are among those most impacted by pollution, waste, climate change, and other environmental challenges. By having an Equity/Environmental Justice seat on the EAB, we will be better able to consider the voices of those most affected by environmental degradation, and better able to address environmental racism.

Finally, we believe that having At-Large seats on the EAB will give us greater flexibility to address environmental issues in Durham. Having some defined roles is valuable, but a rigid structure when 100% of the roles are prescribed does not allow sufficient agility as issues change over time. Some Boards and Commissions are 100% At-Large. We are seeking 20% of our total EAB membership to be At-Large, or three At-Large seats. These seats plus the one Equity/Environmental Justice seat would bring the EAB to fifteen members.