

October 2, 2025

RE: Letter of Support for TJPDC Corporation's Healthy Planet - Chesapeake Bay & Water Quality Grant Application

Dear Oak Hill Fund Grant Committee,

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) is writing to provide support for the grant application submitted by TJPDC Corporation for their Septic Assistance Program under the Healthy Planet - Chesapeake Bay & Water Quality Grant opportunity.

As the regional planning commission serving the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson, TJPDC maintains a formal partnership with TJPDC Corporation through a Memorandum of Agreement. This partnership enables the Corporation to implement programs that address regional challenges, with the Corporation utilizing TJPDC staff and resources to carry out its work.

Regional Significance and Need

The Septic Assistance Program addresses a documented regional need. Water quality data indicates that 66% of our region's impaired waterways show E. Coli impairments, with septic systems representing a significant contributing factor. Regional statistics show that septic systems in the Chesapeake Bay area contribute approximately 7.8 million pounds of nitrogen annually, and over half of Virginia's 1.1 million onsite sewage systems are approaching the end of their operational lifespan.

The program provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners for septic system maintenance, repairs, and replacements. This approach addresses both immediate public health concerns and longer-term environmental protection needs.

These statistics represent more than environmental concerns—they reflect a public health crisis disproportionately affecting our low-income residents, often on a fixed income, who lack the financial resources to maintain or replace failing systems.

Program Implementation

During its inaugural year, TJPDC implemented this program using Department of Environmental Quality funding. The program established working relationships with local housing foundations, the Virginia

Department of Health, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to identify homeowners in need of assistance.

The Corporation will continue this work using the same experienced TJPDC staff who developed the initial program, ensuring continuity in service delivery and community partnerships.

Regional Planning Alignment

This program relates to several TJPDC priority program areas as outlined in our Strategic Plan FY 2024-2028:

- **Environmental Planning:** Supports watershed improvement and solid waste management planning efforts
- **Housing:** Addresses infrastructure needs that affect housing habitability and property maintenance
- **Regional/Local Planning:** Contributes to comprehensive planning for infrastructure needs in rural and suburban areas

Organizational Support

TJPDC will continue to provide staff resources and technical assistance to support program implementation through our existing Memorandum of Agreement with the Corporation. This includes coordination with regional environmental initiatives and data sharing to support program effectiveness.

The program's focus on assisting underserved communities while addressing environmental challenges aligns with regional planning objectives for sustainable development and public health protection.

We support the Corporation's application for continued funding of this program and believe it represents a practical approach to addressing both environmental and community needs in our region.

Sincerely,

Keith Smith, Chair

Christine EB Jacobs, Executive Director