

FW: written testimony for water rates board

Paul Fugazzotto

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2016 1:50 PM**To:** WATERINFO

From: Alice Edgerton**Sent:** Sunday, November 20, 2016 10:04 PM**To:** Gemela McClendon <Gemela.McClendon@Phila.gov>**Subject:** written testimony for water rates board

My name is Alice Edgerton, and I am a graduate student in Public Horticulture at the University of Delaware and Longwood Gardens. I'm also a former employee of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and have worked with the Philadelphia Water Department on their Green Cities, Clean Waters initiative. I would like to state my strong support for a 100% stormwater fee exemption for Philadelphia community gardens.

Community gardens do not contribute to stormwater runoff issues. They are instead a critical part of the solution. Gardens are often the only pervious area for blocks, and in addition to absorbing the stormwater on site, they also help manage stormwater runoff from other parcels. Many community gardens capture water through use of rain barrels and employ other sustainable practices that are teaching tools for neighborhood residents. It would make much more sense to offer a stormwater credit for community gardens, but the least we can do as a city is offer them exemption from the stormwater fee.

I would like to urge the Water Rates Board to exempt the entirety of stormwater fee for gardens. It would be a mistake to consider a partial fee exemption as a good compromise. Food insecurity is a chronic problem in many of our neighborhoods, and community gardens are a very real help for many low income families. Even a small increase in garden fees can make garden membership inaccessible for people that need it most. A 100% exemption for all gardens would not cause the increase of rates for the rest of customers. The benefits provided by community gardens more than offset the relatively small amount of money to be gained by charging the fee. Thank you.

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