

FW: storm water charges

Paul Fugazzotto

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2016 1:52 PM**To:** WATERINFO

From: barbmwolf
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2016 8:56 PM
To: Gemela McClendon <Gemela.McClendon@Phila.gov>
Cc: Jennifer Greenberg <jgreenberg@pennhort.org>
Subject: storm water charges

Hello, I am writing in opposition to the proposed storm water fees for community gardens. I am the garden coordinator of the North Street Garden. Our garden was started almost 25 years ago, initially to make a garden in place of empty, trash strewn lots where prostitutes and drug dealers hung out. We are currently a small mixed flower/vegetable garden of three small combined city lots: 1521, 1523 and 1525 North Street in the far eastern end of the Spring Garden neighborhood. Since the beginning, our small garden has served a limited and diverse number of Black, white and Hispanic gardeners, but we have also served a larger band of the neighborhood by having groups of neighbors get together to work to clean up and beautify the neighborhood, to make social connections through cookouts and pot lucks and to bring neighbors together to discuss community concerns of the nearby blocks. Given the current high density of housing in our small pocket of Spring Garden and with several large asphalt covered parking lots along the 600 block of North 15th Street and along the 1500 block of North Street, our garden is really the only open, non-paved area to absorb rain water in the immediate far eastern end of our community. In this sense we are a benefit to the city and the water department in reducing storm water runoff. With only a limited number of dues paying gardeners the proposed storm water fees would be a very high cost and significantly raise our current dues. As I am the one responsible for collecting our fees and paying our bills for electric and water, I know increased fees would make it harder for a number of our longer term gardeners to handle financially and certainly harder for me to collect dues! I cannot believe the revenue that the water department would gain by charging storm water fees to community gardens is significant enough to warrant the negative impact these additional costs would have on the gardens. Given the positive effect gardens have in reducing storm water, this charge seems to me short sighted. I do hope the water department will reconsider this proposal and fully exempt community gardens from storm water fees.

Sincerely, Barbara M. Wolf