



September 26, 2019

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Chair Dorsey,

Like so many Arlington residents and businesses, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce has been looking forward for several years to the recent launch of the Permit Arlington online permitting system. Permit Arlington has promised a more streamlined permit application process, and with it, the hope that the approval process would be more efficient. We are concerned, however, that Arlington County government is not offering a faster turn-around time for permits via the new Permit Arlington system, particularly as technology fees have increased with the system's launch.

With the launch of Permit Arlington, there has been an increase from 5% to 10% in the "automation enhancement surcharge" for all applications subject to the fee. However, the Permit Arlington website explicitly states, "Review processing times have not changed."¹ Permit Arlington is now the only method by which applicants may file for 28 different types of permits, giving no choice but to use the system and to pay the added fee. As such, permit applicants, both businesses and residents, are being asked to pay more for this system without receiving a commensurate improvement in service.

The adoption of a streamlined, online permitting system and the charging of higher application fees should lead to faster processing and improved customer service. The Chamber requests that Arlington County work to reduce the turn-around time for permits via Permit Arlington to validate the additional technology fees and promises made to the community.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Bates' in a cursive script.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board Vice Chair Libby Garvey and members Katie Cristol, Matt de Ferranti, and Erik Gutshall; County Manager Mark Schwartz; Business Ombudsperson Katelyn Thomas

¹ <https://building.arlingtonva.us/permits/permit-arlington/>, accessed September 26, 2019.