



The Exposé on Fill Dirt



In November, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors approved a zoning amendment that affects agriculturally zoned properties. This zoning amendment requires a special use permit for storage or disposal of nonagricultural excavation material (fill dirt) on A-1 zoned properties. This is only if the material transported to the property exceeds 15 deliveries on any day or 300 deliveries in a year. The amendment language also defines nonagricultural excavation material as only rock and soil not generated on the farm.

The Prince William SWCD discourages the disposal of nonagricultural excavation material on cropland, hayland, or pastureland. The material is generally of poor quality and lacks the structure, organic matter, and nutrients needed to successfully establish grass or crops. Our experience has been that it is a long and expensive process to overcome these obstacles and convert this fill material into a productive soil.

If you do accept nonagricultural fill material on your property, we suggest that you do not bury your top soil in the process. The top soil and native subsoil should be separately stripped and stockpiled before fill material is brought to the site. The stockpiled subsoil and topsoil should then be spread back on top of the fill material in the correct order. The fill material, subsoil, and topsoil all need to be compacted as they are put back into



Runoff from fill dirt eventually gets into our waterways. This extra sedimentation clogs the lungs of aquatic organisms and prevents sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, making survival nearly impossible.

the soil profile. All this excavation requires that appropriate erosion and sediment controls are in place until the site is stabilized with vegetation. Excavation or spreading of fill material is prohibited in a resource protection area or wetland without the appropriate permits from Prince William County, Virginia DEQ, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Contact the Prince William County Zoning office at (703) 792-8154 or zoning@pwcgov.org if you have further questions on the ordinance. If you need technical assistance identifying resource protection areas and other sensitive sites on



your property, appropriate erosion and sediment controls, or reestablishing vegetation on areas of fill material, contact the District office at (571) 379-7514 or pwsxcd@pwsxcd.org.