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REMARKS FROM DENISE FREELAND

Good morning. My name is Denise Freeland and I want to express collective gratitude from the Alexandria arts community gathered here this morning for your generous support of our activities, activities which are tremendously diverse, which increase the quality of life for Alexandrians, and which generate income to help fund some of the City's expenses.

I am wearing two hats this morning. First, I am the Founder and Artistic Director of The EcoVoce Ensemble whose performance specialty is music about nature and the earth. We are a trio of professional musicians – soprano, piano, and flute -- who are passionate about music and about raising environmental awareness through our music. Our commitment to this mission is reflected in our name – “Eco” comes from the word “ecology” and “Voce” is the Italian word for voice. We serve as a musical voice for ecology, giving voice to those that have no voice – birds, oceans, animals, trees. Your past support of EoVoce has enabled us to develop a partnership with parks, has allowed us to bring our innovative concert programs to the schools and after school programs, and helped us create meaningful collaborative concert programs with some of the finest arts organizations in our city.

I am also here this morning wearing the hat of Vice President for Advocacy for the Arts Forum of Alexandria. As you know, we are very fortunate to be living in a community where the performing arts and visual arts organizations and individuals are so rich and varied. The work we artistic people do in the community not only provides top quality entertainment for our citizens but has also resulted in Alexandria becoming a major arts destination. As you know, those who attend Alexandria arts and cultural events spend an average of \$39.65 per person. We artists have a positive economic impact on our community. Because our wonderful city benefits so greatly from the arts, I respectfully ask that funding for the Commission for the Arts be maintained at the 2010 levels at a minimum. Thank you for your time and consideration.