



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
March 22, 2016

**CONTACT: Julene Joy**  
703.403.2346 (cell)  
[jjoy@fergusonfoundation.org](mailto:jjoy@fergusonfoundation.org)

## **Regional Leaders Receive Potomac Champion Awards; Talk Trash-Free Solutions for the Anacostia River and Beyond**

(College Park, MD) **Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III; Montgomery County Executive Isiah "Ike" Leggett; and Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser were honored as Potomac Champions** today at the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Transforming Communities Summit as elected officials, business leaders, community activists, and municipal managers focused on regional policies and efforts to reduce trash in communities along the Potomac River Watershed, particularly the Anacostia River.

The Summit's theme of Trash-Free Solutions for Healthy Lives, Clean Land, and Safe Water was reflected in roundtable discussions that exhibited the enormous progress that has been made over the past decade since the Trash Treaty was signed in 2005. Sessions included information on how to comply with Styrofoam bans in several local jurisdictions, large scale food composting, and technologies for trapping trash in streams.

"The 2005 Trash Treaty brought attention to the pervasive problem of trash in our watershed," said Alice Ferguson Foundation Executive Director Lori Arguelles. "While the past decade has yielded enormous progress, there is still much to be done to rid our communities and waterways of trash. Given that 80% of people in the Washington metropolitan region get their drinking water from the Potomac River, we all have a vested interest in transforming our communities for the sake of healthy lives, clean land, and safe water."

The Trash Treaty, signed by nearly 200 regional elected officials, called for supporting and implementing regional strategies aimed at reducing trash and increasing recycling; increasing education and awareness of the trash issue throughout the Potomac Watershed; and convening annually to discuss and evaluate measures and actions addressing trash reduction.

Bag laws incentivizing reusable bags, Styrofoam bans, and plastic microbead bans are some of the significant accomplishments since the first Summit was held in March of 2006. These progressive policies, along with community focused initiatives, are among the reasons that County Executives Baker and Leggett, along with Mayor Bowser, are being recognized as Potomac Champions.

-More-

Other award recipients include: Julie Lawson, Trash Free Maryland Executive Director; Maurice Collier-Shabazz, Phyllis E. Williams Elementary School Teacher; District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department, Sixth District; Frankie Sherman, Charles County Department of Public Works; Deborah Turner, Coordinator for the District Heights Community Garden Program.

**The Alice Ferguson Foundation** connects people to the natural world, sustainable agricultural practices, and the cultural heritage of their local watershed through education, stewardship, and advocacy. AFF operates the **Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center**—a 330 acre working farm located on the shorelines of the Potomac River south of Washington, D.C. Learn more at [www.fergusonfoundation.org](http://www.fergusonfoundation.org)

###

## 2016 Potomac Champion Award Recipients

### Policy Leaders:

**The Honorable Rushern L. Baker, III:** During his tenure as Prince George’s County Executive, Mr. Baker has concentrated on improving the quality of life for county residents. His Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative has included a focus on cleaning up trash in communities most in need. Under his leadership Prince George’s County has, once again, led the state in diverting waste from landfills. The County’s Yard Waste Composting Program processes more than 50 tons of material annually and the County’s innovative Public Private Partnership approach to stormwater management have earned widespread accolades.

**The Honorable Muriel Bowser:** As a signatory to the Trash Treaty while serving as a member of the Council of the District of Columbia, Ms. Bowser has been a long-standing supporter of efforts to rid the city of trash and clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Since becoming Mayor in 2015, she has continued to chart a strong course for sustainability in the nation’s capital and made the restoration of the Anacostia River a priority. Among her administration’s priorities is implementation of the city’s Styrofoam ban which is being carried out by the District Department of Energy and Environment. This agency also oversees enforcement of the city’s bag law, which was the first in the region.

**The Honorable Isiah “Ike” Leggett:** As he enters his second decade as Montgomery County Executive, Mr. Leggett has built a formidable list of ‘firsts.’ Under his leadership the County implemented the first MS-4 program in Maryland; implemented the state’s first and only bag law designed to reduce litter and protect the environment; and initiated the County’s green business certification program. He was a strong supporter of the Styrofoam ban, which took effect at the beginning of this year and has also required Montgomery County government buildings to be LEED-certified, which among other things encourages the use of recycled materials.

**Julie Lawson, Trash Free Maryland:** Known as a tireless and effective advocate for policy changes around the region, Ms. Lawson has been at the forefront of every impactful trash-related law on the books, from bag laws, to Styrofoam bans, to the groundbreaking legislation on microbeads in Maryland, that served as a catalyst for the national law signed by President Obama in

December of 2015. In her role as Executive Director of the Trash Free Maryland Alliance, Julie was instrumental in bringing attention to the pervasive problem of plastics in the Chesapeake Bay when she initiated the first 'Trash Trawl' in 2014, an effort which was replicated last year.

**Education Leader:**

**Maurice Collier-Shabazz:** Mr. Collier-Shabazz has led Prince George's County's Phyllis E. Williams Elementary School in becoming a Trash Free School, with the ultimate goal of achieving Green School Certification through the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education. A passionate and committed partner since 2013, he has also participated in Schoolyards as Classrooms Teacher Training at AFF's Hard Bargain Farm Education Center.

**Enforcement Partner:**

**District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department, Sixth District:** Under the leadership of Commander David Taylor, the Sixth District has made a strong commitment to community engagement, including a focus on conducting community cleanups throughout the year. District officers have led continual and effective litter enforcement efforts in Ward 7 including a strong focus on ticketing during Litter Enforcement Month and a partnership with the District's Department of Public Works to address illegal dumping cleanup and enforcement.

**Cleanup Leader:**

**Frankie Sherman, Charles County Maryland:** Ms. Sherman is vital partner of the Alice Ferguson Foundation in the Southern Maryland region. She aggressively supports and promotes the Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, working to recruit and assist local site leaders. She is the distribution point for supplies for Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck. Frankie leads Charles County's anti-littering campaign and looks for new and creative ways to fight litter. Ms. Sherman works with local agencies in litter enforcement campaigns, oversees a cart only curbside recycling program to reduce accidental litter, and utilizes trail-cameras to identify suspects in illegal dumping activities.

**Community Leader:**

**Deborah Turner:** As the Garden Coordinator for the District Heights Community Garden Program, Ms. Turner has organized numerous Stream Cleanups in District Heights and is a strong supporter of the Litter Prevention Campaign. Ms. Turner also sits on the Environmental Action Committee for Prince George's Department of the Environment and is an active member of her community.