

Support House Bill 1526/Senate Bill 851

Virginia Clean Economy Act

Delegate Rip Sullivan, Senator Jennifer McClellan

Reasons to support House Bill 1526/Senate Bill 851

The Virginia Clean Economy Act gives us a 100% carbon-free electricity grid *and* eliminates pollution by Virginia's utilities by 2050. This will lower monthly utility bills, create tens of thousands of new clean energy jobs, and give us cleaner air while tackling the Commonwealth's contribution to climate change and making our energy economy more just and equitable for all Virginians.

The Virginia Clean Economy Act takes the following four steps to get us to 100% carbon-free electricity with zero utility emissions:

- 1) Eliminating Utility Pollution Throughout the Commonwealth: It's not enough to increase the amount of clean power Virginia produces and uses. If we really want to combat climate change, we also need to make sure our utilities eliminate all carbon pollution by 2050. The Virginia Clean Economy Act commits the Commonwealth to joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI uses market forces to incentivize utilities to reduce carbon pollution, and uses revenues to invest in energy efficiency. The bill goes a step further by requiring Virginia's grid to become fully carbon-free and eliminating *all* electricity generation pollution in the Commonwealth, eliminating a crucial loophole that could allow power companies to keep burning gas or coal and sell that electricity out of state.
- 2) Using Energy Efficiency to Lower Bills and Reduce Energy Demand: The cheapest energy is energy you never use, but right now Virginia is 49th out of 50 states for utility-led energy efficiency. The Virginia Clean Economy Act will make major investments in efficiency and enact a statewide Energy Efficiency Resource Standard that will establish long-term energy reduction targets and ensure that we're reducing Virginians' demand for energy, which lowers power bills and reduces the amount of power we need to produce around the Commonwealth.
- 3) Enacting a Renewable Portfolio Standard to Make Our Grid 100% Carbon-Free: Keeping in line with Gov. Northam's executive order, Virginia Clean Economy Act enacts a statewide Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that brings us to 30% renewable energy by 2030. After that, the RPS gradually phases in clean energy sources and phases out coal and gas to ensure our grid becomes 100% carbon-free by 2050. The RPS both ensures Virginia makes the transition

to 100% clean energy by 2050, and gives clean energy companies the certainty they need to create good-paying jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

4) Distributing Clean Power Generation Through Rooftop and Shared Solar:

Empowering homeowners, municipalities, and industry to contribute to Virginia's energy market through rooftop solar is an important part of making sure we generate enough clean energy to power the Commonwealth. The Virginia Clean Economy Act removes some of the unnecessary and burdensome hurdles currently preventing too many consumers from installing rooftop solar panels. Increased rooftop solar creates jobs, reduces the amount of energy utilities need to produce, reduces power bills for the consumers, and increases the amount of emission-free power produced in Virginia without passing costs on to ratepayers. The bill also allows for community solar projects, which allow renters, small businesses, and individuals who might not otherwise be able to afford it take advantage of the benefits of solar power.



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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.