2023 CONSERVATION COMMUNITY BUDGET PRIORITIES

Funding to protect our natural resources is a priority for the conservation community, with a focus on budget investments to meet our 2024 Chesapeake Bay clean up goals, accelerate clean transportation, and secure lasting funding for our natural landscapes. Virginia Conservation Network and the conservation community have taken positions on the following budget amendments:

CLEANING UP THE CHESAPEAKE BAY
SUPPORT 108 #2h $175K for two staff over both years of the biennium to help evaluate strategies to achieve Chesapeake Bay WIP goals.
SUPPORT 373 #1h, 373 #1s Convenes a work group to develop recommendations for a program to accelerate nutrient reductions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed
SUPPORT 374 #16h, 374 #4s Two positions to enhance training and technical assistance provided by the department to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts
SUPPORT 374 #2h, 374 #10s Convene a stakeholder group to achieve our agricultural water quality obligations under Virginia’s Phase III Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan
SUPPORT 374 #5h, 374 #9s Funds marketing for Virginia’s Agricultural Cost-Share Program
SUPPORT 374 #6h, 374 #11s Funding to support education and outreach programming for the 47 Soil and Water Conservation District offices
SUPPORT 374 #7h, 374 #8s Establishes a pilot special grant fund to incentivize the most cost-effective agricultural best management practices to achieve the Phase III Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan
SUPPORT 374 #8h, 374 #1s, 374 #16s Funding to upgrade and develop the Conservation Application Suite (CAS) for the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program
OPPOSE 375 #11h Authorizes the Soil and Water Conservation Board to allocate unobligated Agricultural BMP and technical assistance funding to other Soil and Water Conservation District projects
SUPPORT 389 #1h & 389 #1s $3.75M in FY24 to clean the Elizabeth River
SUPPORT C-80 #1h, C-80 #1s Provide funding based on the 2022 Needs Assessment from the DEQ to meet Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan

CONSERVING VIRGINIA’S NATURAL LANDSCAPES
SUPPORT 98 #2h $6M each year for the Virginia Farmland Preservation Fund
SUPPORT 98 #3s $5M in FY24 to the Virginia Farmland Preservation Fund
SUPPORT 108 #6h $1M each year to match federal programs providing funds for agricultural and conservation easements
SUPPORT 108 #5h, 108 #2s $500K for a forest and tree canopy coverage study
SUPPORT 375 #10h & 375 #10s $69M for State Parks System
SUPPORT 375 #13s & 375 #13h $287.5K in FY24 for Breaks Interstate Park
SUPPORT 375 #7s, 375 #8h & 375 #15h Brings the Virginia Land Conservation Fund total to $30M each year
SUPPORT 376 #1s Ten positions for State Parks & Natural Area Preserves
SUPPORT 382 #3s, 452 #1h, & 452 #12s Funding in FY24 for wildlife corridors
SUPPORT 386 #10h, 386 #20s, C-50 #2h, C-50 #2s $3M in FY24 to the Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund
KEEPING OUR WATER FREE OF INDUSTRIAL TOXINS & PLASTICS

374 #10h $200K each year and one position to establish an anti-littering educational program
378 #3h Prohibits the sale and distribution of high PAH pavement sealant
378 #5h Hazardous Substance Aboveground Storage Tank Fund
380 #9h, 380 #1s, & 380 #2s Funding to support Keep Virginia Beautiful in order to support its efforts to reduce litter

ENCOURAGING NATIVE & REDUCING INVASIVE SPECIES

SUPPORT 100 #1h, 100 #2s, 108 #1h, 108 #4s, 374 #4h, 374 #13s, 382 #2h, & 382 #2s Provides staff to implement the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan
SUPPORT 374 #11h $593K and five positions for the Natural Heritage Program
SUPPORT 375 #3s & C-51 #1h Funding for state-owned Natural Area Preserves
SUPPORT 375 #5s $1.1M for the Natural Heritage Program
SUPPORT 375 #6h & C-51 #2s Removes restrictions on acquisition of land for Natural Area Preserves

PROTECTING VIBRANT AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

SUPPORT 99 #2h & 99#2s $4M for the Governor’s Blue Catfish Industries Development Fund
SUPPORT 160 #1h $345k for the VIMS shellfish breeding program
SUPPORT 160 #3h & 160 #3s Funds the study of Menhaden as a forage fish and for its economic value
SUPPORT 276 #4h & 276 #17s Funding for an oyster shell tax credit
SUPPORT 382 #1h, 382 #5h, C-52.60 #2s Expand and upgrade infrastructure at the Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic Wildlife Center in Charles City County for the purposes of freshwater mussel propagation and restoration

SUPPORTING LOCAL FOODS & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

98 #3h Additional $1.3 million in FY24 for grants to increase meat processing capacity
129 #14h $50K in FY24 to cover any costs for the Farm to School Program
136 #20s $75K in FY24 to fund a subscription for the Statewide Agricultural Experience Tracker
228 #2h, 228 #3h, & 228 #2s Additional funding to cover operating costs and student membership for the Virginia FFA

TRANSFORMING LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

OPPOSE 452 Q, R, #3s, #4s, #11s, #9s, #4h and any other amendment that would use the General Fund for highway expansion, construction, or repair projects
SUPPORT 114 #12s & 114 #23h Additional $75M in FY24 for the Virginia Housing Trust Fund
SUPPORT 117 #1h $50K for regulations for electric vehicle charging for residential housing with more than 25 units
SUPPORT 121 #4h & 121 #2s $25M for the Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Fund
SUPPORT 121 #6h $40M to fund the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program
SUPPORT 375 #23h & 375 #8h $5M in FY24 for the Get Outdoors Fund

DEFENDING CLIMATE POLICY

OPPOSE any amendments that redirect RGGI funds away from the designated Community Flood Preparedness Fund or Low-Income Energy Efficiency Program
SUPPORT 121 #1s $20M for the Virginia Brownfield & Coal Mine Renewable Energy Grant Fund
SUPPORT 121 #4s Funds the Commonwealth Solar and Economic Development Program
OPPOSE 272 #1h & 272 #2h Funds the Department of Regulatory Innovation to oversee the Virginia Regulatory Sandbox Program

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Learn more about the conservation community’s top priorities: vcnva.org/our-common-agenda