

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

Conservation Lobby Day 2025



UNDERSTANDING & MINIMIZING THE IMPACTS OF DATA CENTERS' GROWTH

Virginia is home to the largest concentration of data centers in the world, widely cited as hosting 70% of global internet traffic. This massive industry is continuing to grow very fast, requiring huge amounts of energy, land, and water to operate, resulting in widespread community impacts. Yet, the Commonwealth does not currently have any regulatory oversight of data center development, and localities continue to approve more facilities without considering the cumulative impacts. The Commonwealth needs to address the explosive growth of data centers to make sure the state can maintain efforts to meet climate goals, improve air and water quality, advance land conservation, and protect national and state parks.

SUPPORT:

HB1601 (Thomas) Allows a locality to require a site assessment of the impact on surrounding resources by a proposed high energy use facility

HB2035 (Simonds) Requires transparency around data centers' water and energy usage and information be made available through a state-level clearinghouse

HB2101 (Lopes-Maldonado) & SB960 (Perry) Allows the SCC to examine who is paying for data center energy infrastructure and minimizes unreasonable impact to ratepayers





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budget positions at
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SAFER STREETS FOR WALKERS & BIKERS

Walking and biking are important modes of pollution-free transportation and are critical as first- and last-mile connections to rail and transit. Most Virginians don't walk or bike nearly as much as they would like because fatalities of people walking and bicycling continue to climb every year. The General Assembly must support several key measures to lower the risk of injuries and fatalities happening on our streets.

SUPPORT:

HB2041 (Seibold) Expands the use of speed cameras to reduce speeding and associated traffic fatalities

SB1007 (Surovell) Establishes a new Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Safety Improvements Infrastructure Fund and Program to support bicycle, pedestrian, and safety infrastructure projects that are not part of road-widening efforts

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Where we live and how we get around drives a significant share of carbon emissions and makes an impact on land and water quality. Local governing bodies play an essential role in land use decision-making, and smart land use decisions require sufficient time and discretion to review proposals. The General Assembly should allow for more density, affordable housing, and mixed-use in planned developed areas to lower transportation and building emissions as well as decrease sprawling development on forests and farmland.

SUPPORT:

HB2324 (Lovejoy) & SB1317 (McPike) Expands commuter bus service between high employment centers in Greater Washington and the communities of Front Royal and Warrenton with large commuter populations

SJ260 (Roem) Directs a study and report on VDOT's funding resources, allocation policies, and practices for maintaining Virginia's surface transportation infrastructure.

OPPOSE:

HB2148 (Milde) Greatly shortens planning commissions' time to review land use plans

HB2293 (Coyner)/SB974 (VanValkenburg) Eliminates governing body authority to review site plans

HB2480 (Owen) Eliminates traffic studies for new residential developments below 50 units, which would encourage sprawl

HB2499 (Owen) & HB2660 (Simon) Undermines local authority to incorporate comprehensive plan policies into zoning and subdivision ordinances and decisions