

SUPPORT HB2034

Topic: Creation of Wetlands Policy Task Force

Bill Patron: Delegate Simonds (D-70)

OVERVIEW:

HB2034 creates a task force to develop strategies for protecting, restoring, and creating wetlands, one of Virginia's most valuable natural resources. The task force, consisting of universities, nonprofits, and other government divisions, will ensure these strategies consider the impacts of climate change and prioritize implementation through state plans and programs.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- **Urgency of Action:** The [Coastal Resilience Master Plan Phase I](#) estimates that up to 89% of Virginia's tidal wetlands could be lost by 2080 due to sea level rise, underscoring the critical need for proactive, coordinated strategies to protect this cherished natural resource.
- **Vital Ecosystem Services:** Wetlands filter water, mitigate storm surge, sequester carbon, and provide critical habitat, making their protection crucial for Virginia's environmental health, economy, and resilience.
- **Comprehensive Planning:** The task forces ensure a coordinated approach to integrating wetland protection strategies into Virginia's Coastal Resilience Master Plan and state-wide Flood Protection Master Plan.
- **Scientific and Stakeholder Expertise:** By involving diverse stakeholders, the task force will generate inclusive, evidence-based solutions to address wetlands losses and adverse impacts.
- **Future Preparedness:** Proactively planning for wetland persistence protects Virginia's coastlines, ensures a thriving economy, preserves our way of life, and avoids costly consequences from inaction.



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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.