

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PREVIEW



We'll begin at 9:15 AM |



VIRGINIA
CONSERVATION
NETWORK

WATCH PARTIES



AGENDA

1. Lay of the Land & the Gubernatorial Transition
2. Clean Water & Flood Resilience
 - Chesapeake Bay & Flood Resilience
 - Toxics in Water: PFAS
 - *Audience Questions*
3. Energy Demand & Local, Clean Solutions
 - Solar & Battery Storage
 - Fighting Fossil Fuels
 - *Audience Questions*
4. Data Center Reform
 - Data Center Oversight & Tax Incentives
 - Data Center Water Supply & Withdrawal
 - *Audience Questions*
5. Land & Wildlife Conservation
 - Access to the Outdoors
 - Preserving Tree Canopy
 - *Audience Questions*
6. Reforming Transportation Infrastructure
 - Supporting Public Transit
 - Vehicle Electrification
 - *Audience Questions*

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTS



Blair St. Ledger-Olson

Director of Advocacy & Campaigns at Virginia League of Conservation Voters (VALCV)



Victoria Higgins

VA Director of Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)



Josephus Allmond

Staff Attorney (Also Co-chair Energy Committee on Spanberger's transition team) at Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC)



Jay Ford

Policy Manager at Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)



David Flores

Senior Legal Counsel at Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN)



Peter Anderson

Director of State Energy Policy at Appalachian Voices



Pat Calvert

Virginia Director of Conservation at American Rivers



Maribel Castañeda

Manager at Our Virginia Outdoors



Ann Jurczyk

Virginia Manager of Urban Restoration at Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)



Daniel Plaugher

Executive Director of Virginians for High Speed Rail



Lena Lewis

Energy and Climate Policy Manager at The Nature Conservancy in Virginia (TNC)



VIRGINIA
CONSERVATION
NETWORK

Text your questions for the live Q&A to (804) 214-6737



LAY OF LAND

Blair St. Ledger-Olson
Director of Advocacy &
Campaigns



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS

What We'll Cover

- Incoming administration
- Key dates
- Current chamber, caucus, and committee breakdowns & leadership
- Anticipated themes and dynamics



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Incoming Administration

- 2025 election was historic for Democrats, sweeping all three statewides
 - Largest majority in the HoD in recent history
- Transition teams are making progress
- Coming into their roles with a mandate on affordability



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Key Dates

- Session convenes: January 14, 2026
 - Inauguration: Jan 17th, 2026
- Crossover: Feb 18th, 2026
- Sine Die: March 14th, 2026



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Chamber Breakdowns

Senate (21 D* - 19 R)

- Democratic Leadership:
 - Majority Leader: Senator Scott Surovell (Fairfax)
 - Caucus Chair: Senator Mamie Locke (Hampton)
 - President Pro Tem: Senator Louise Lucas (Portsmouth)
- Republican Leadership:
 - Minority Leader: Senator Ryan McDougle (Hanover)
 - Caucus Chair: Senator Mark Obenshain (Rockingham)
- Democratic Lt Governor (tie-break if necessary)



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Chamber Breakdowns

House of Delegates (64 D* - 36 R)

- Democratic Leadership:
 - Speaker of the House: Delegate Don Scott (Portsmouth)
 - Majority Leader: Delegate Charniele Herring (Alexandria)
 - Caucus Chair: Kathy Tran (Fairfax)
- Republican Leadership:
 - Minority Leader: Delegate Terry Kilgore (Scott County)
 - Caucus Chair: Delegate Scott Wyatt (Hanover)



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House Committee Chairs



- **Agriculture, Chesapeake, & Natural Resources:** Delegate Lopez
- **Appropriations:** Delegate Torian
- Communications, Technology, & Innovation: Delegate Hayes
- **Counties, Cities, & Towns:** Delegate Mundon King
- Courts of Justice: Delegate Hope
- Education: Delegate Rasoul
- **Finance:** Delegate Watts
- **General Laws:** Delegate Bulova
- Health & Human Services: Delegate Sickles
- **Labor & Commerce:** Delegate Ward
- Privileges & Elections: Delegate Price
- Public Safety: Delegate Simon
- **Rules:** Speaker Scott
- **Transportation:** Delegate Delaney

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Senate Committee Chairs



- **Agriculture, Conservation, & Natural Resources:** Senator Marsden
- **Commerce & Labor:** Senator Deeds
- Courts of Justice: Senator Surovell
- Education & Health: Senator Favola
- **Finance & Appropriations:** Senator Lucas
- **General Laws & Technology:** Senator Ebbin
- **Local Government: Senator McPike**
- Privileges & Elections: Senator Rouse
- Rehabilitation & Social Services: Senator VanValkenburg
- **Rules:** Senator Locke
- **Transportation:** Senator Bagby

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Anticipated Dynamics

- New membership
 - House of Delegates
 - Governor
 - Lt Governor
 - Attorney General
- Governor Youngkin's last Budget
- Federal dynamics
 - Incoming 2026 elections



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Anticipated Legislative Themes

- Budget Constraints
 - New financial revenue options:
 - Fairfax Casino?
 - Legalization?
- Right to Work & labor protections
- Data Centers & Solar Siting
- Ballot Initiatives
 - Congressional Redistricting
 - Restoration of Rights
 - Reproductive Rights
 - Marriage Equality



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CONTACT



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS

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Director of Advocacy & Campaigns

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<https://valcv.org/take-action-for-conservation/>

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RESTORING OUR BAY AND PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

Jay Ford
CBF



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

New Bay Agreement / Increasing Flooding

- Just this week a revised Bay Agreement was signed
- Achieving the new outcomes has implications for water quality, fisheries, community resilience, and our economy
- Water quality, Wetlands, Tree Canopy, Climate Adaptation, Toxics Policy, & Forest Buffers all areas Virginia fell short

The Four Interconnected Goals of Watershed Restoration



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EXPECTED LEGISLATION & BUDGET

- Pollution Reduction
 - Codifying Pay for Outcomes
 - Fully Funding Needs Assessments
- Healthy Fisheries
 - \$\$- Oyster Stock Assessment, Freshwater Mussels
 - Policy- Fisheries Climate Plan
- Resilient Communities and Wetlands
 - \$\$- RGGI, VCAP, RAFT
 - Policy- Resilient Virginia Revolving Loan Fund, Beneficial Reuse, Wetlands Corridors, Tidal Wetlands Protections, Habitat Committee



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CONTACT



Jay Ford

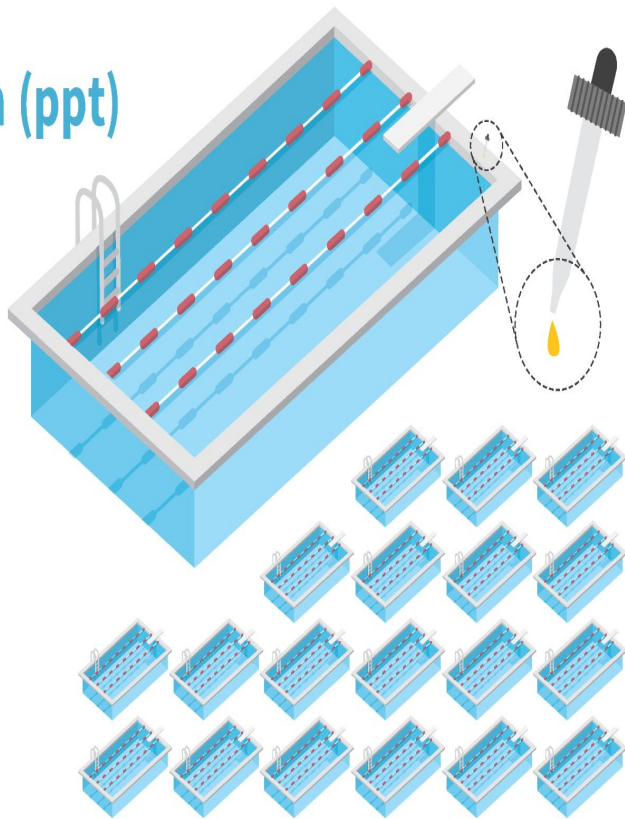
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
jford@cbf.org

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1 part per trillion (ppt)

**IS EQUIVALENT TO A
SINGLE DROP OF
WATER IN**

**20 olympic-sized
swimming pools**



PFAS Toxic 'Forever Chemicals'

David Flores
VP and General Counsel



POTOMAC
RIVERKEEPER®
NETWORK

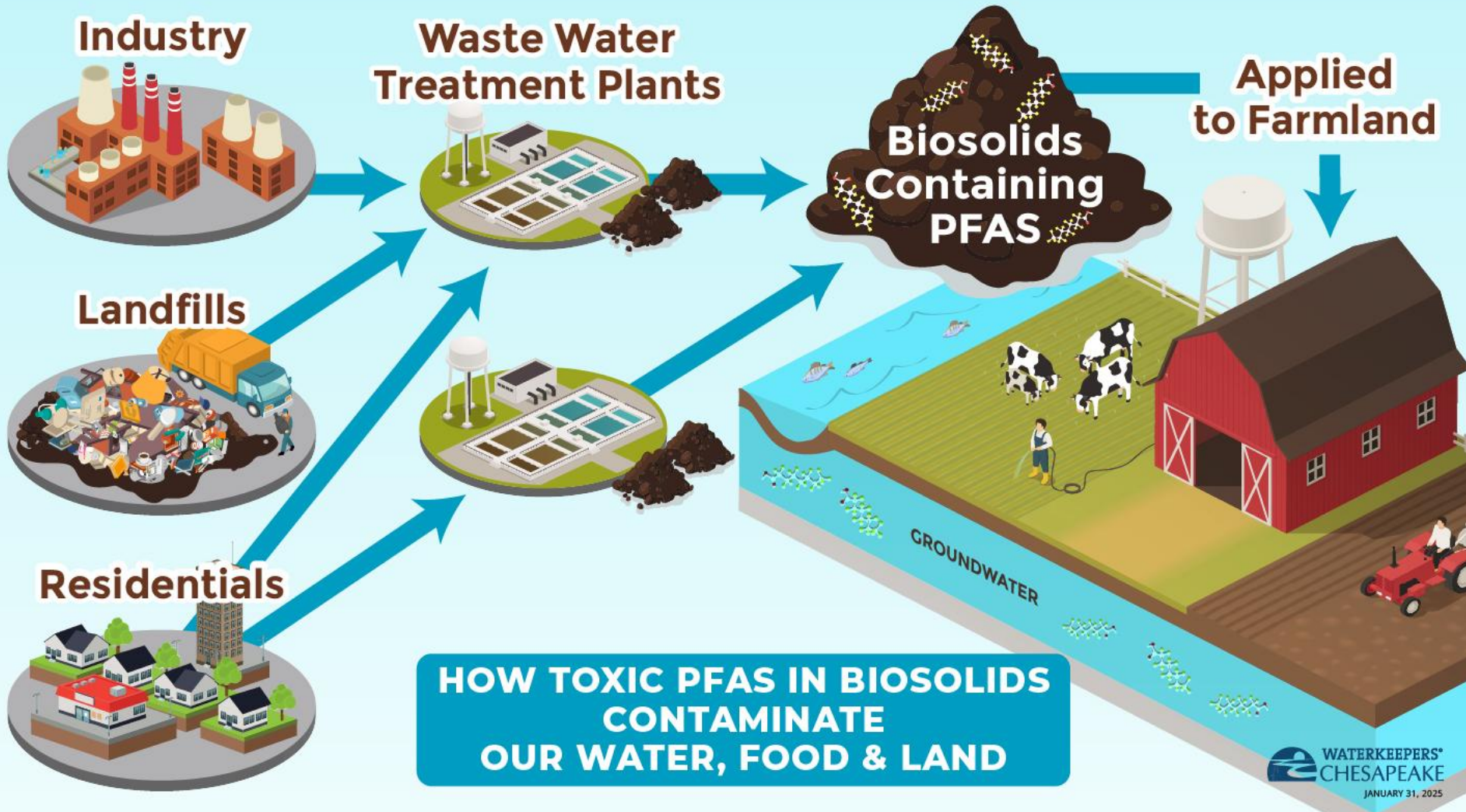
PERNICIOUS LEGACY, ON REPEAT



- PERSISTENT
- BIOACCUMULATIVE
- WIDESPREAD
- TOXIC

EPA's 2024
Drinking
Water Rule:
0.0 ppt (goal)

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Industry

Waste Water Treatment Plants

Landfills

Residential

Biosolids Containing PFAS

Applied to Farmland

GROUNDWATER

HOW TOXIC PFAS IN BIOSOLIDS CONTAMINATE OUR WATER, FOOD & LAND

DISCLOSURE and TESTING

Disclosure by Industrial Users/Manufacturers of PFAS

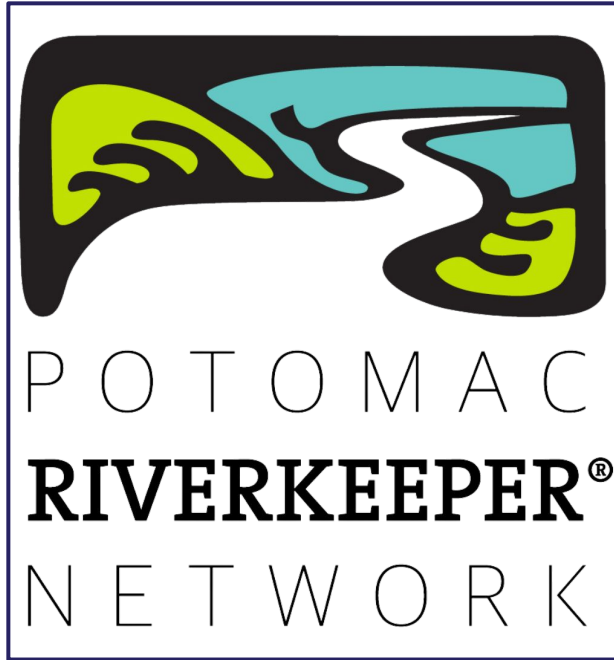
- SB1319 [2025, vetoed]
- Requires self-reporting to support wastewater sector control

Sludge/Biosolids Applications on Farmlands

- Testing: Generation ⇒ Storage ⇒ Disposal (sludge, soil, water)
- Farmers' Right-to-Know (+ environmental regulators need!)
- Interim limits; study for health-based limits and alternatives

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David Flores

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Solar & Storage



Josephus Allmond
Southern Environmental
Law Center

Lack Of Distributed Solar & Storage At Scale

State Distributed Solar Saturation 2021

Distributed solar generation capacity relative to state population

Distributed solar per capita (watts per person)

< 20 20-40 40-100 100-200 200-500 > 500



<https://wri.org/the-states-of-distributed-solar/>

*Not reported data for Alabama or Georgia

Map: States of Distributed Solar - 2021 Update - Source: EIA, U.S. Census Bureau, NREL - Created with Datawrapper

- * Rooftop Solar Penetration: 1% for APCo and <3% for Dominion
- * Residential Storage Attachment Rate: 16% for APCo and 6% for Dominion

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LEGISLATION TO SCALE DG

- **DG Expansion Act** (slightly updated from 2025 version; recommended by CEUR)
- **Storage Expansion Act** (slightly updated from 2025 version; recommended by CEUR)
- **Balcony Solar** (recommended by CEUR)
- **Shared Solar** (program expansions for Dominion and APCo; APCo legislation recommended by CEUR)
- **IRP Reform** (slightly updated from 2025 version; recommended by CEUR)
- **Pay as You Save** (slightly updated from 2024 version)
- **Residential Solar Consumer Protection** (updated from 2024 version)

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Attacks on Core Climate Policies

Victoria Higgins
Chesapeake Climate Action Network



GAS INDUSTRY MOBILIZING

- **Bottomline: we don't need new gas.**
- The gas industry, and utilities, see data center load growth as an opening for a new generation of gas assets.
- This means they would like to be exempted from regulation (like RGGI) to lower emissions, and may seek permissive language to build or otherwise weaken decarbonization statutes.



 Fluvanna Review

Tenaska unveils plans for \$2 billion, 1.5 gigawatt power station in Fluvanna

By Heather Michon Correspondent. Energy developer Tenaska unveiled comprehensive plans for its proposed Expedition Generating Station at a...

Aug 21, 2025

 POLITICO Pro

E&E News: Gas industry sees big opening after Virginia election

ENERGYWIRE | Natural gas proponents have a message for Virginia's incoming Democratic governor: Embrace gas if you want to deliver on a...

2 weeks ago

 Data Center Dynamics

PJM launches fast track proposal for new generation amid data center demand growth

The US' largest regional transmission operator (RTO), PJM Interconnection, has submitted a new proposal to allow new generators to bypass...

Oct 6, 2025



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The world has changed, but natural gas in Virginia is still safe, reliable, affordable, and driving economic growth.



KNOWN THREATS

- Exempting third-party (“merchant”) power plants from RGGI
 - Already, these plants are not subject to the VCEA, so RGGI (or similar future regulation) is the tool to lower and eliminate 3rd party emissions.
- Exempting waste incinerators from potential future air pollution regulation.
- Direct weakening of VCEA decarbonization timeline, retirement schedule, or enforcement tools (i.e. deficiency payments).



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CCAN

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Managing Data Center Energy Use

Commonwealth of Virginia
December 9, 2024

Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia

Data Centers in Virginia
2024

JLARC
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AND REVIEW COMMISSION



Peter Anderson
Appalachian Voices



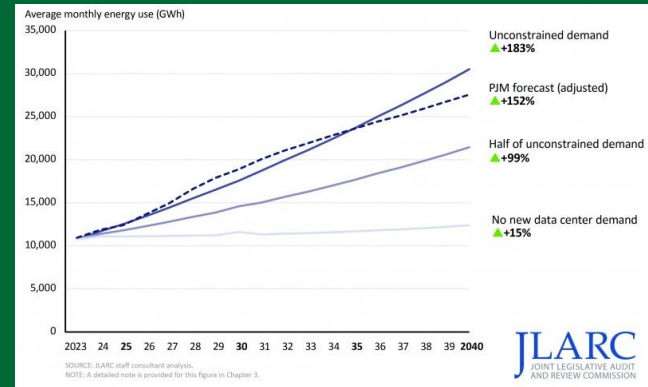
AppalachianVoices

THE CHALLENGE

According to JLARC:

Building enough electricity infrastructure to meet unconstrained data center demand will be **“very difficult”** and even meeting half of that is still **“difficult”**

Data centers’ increased energy demand **will likely increase system costs for all customers**, including non-data center customers



EXPECTED LEGISLATION

- **State oversight**
 - Del. Thomas - similar to [HB 2027](#)
 - Likely Senate vehicle
- **Amending the sales & use tax exemption**
 - Del. Sullivan - similar to [HB 2578](#)
 - Sen. Deeds - similar to [SB 1196](#)
- **Requiring load flexibility**
 - Del. Feggans
 - Sen. McPike

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Water Accountability amid Data Center Expansion

Pat Calvert
Virginia Director of Conservation



**AMERICAN
RIVERS**

Life Depends on RiversSM

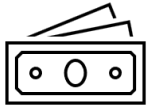
What's the deal?

- Every Virginia locality is now collaboratively developing required Regional Water Supply Plans
- Virginia DEQ lacks clear authority to require disclosure of data center water use
- Through claims of “proprietary” knowledge and trade secrets, data center companies routinely claim exemption from disclosure of the amount of water they use

'Data centers use enormous amounts of water — in some cases over 25% of local community water supplies. Without a consistent and transparent way to track water consumption over time, public and government officials must make decisions about locations, regulations, and sustainability without complete information on how these massive companies' hot and thirsty buildings will affect our communities and environments.'

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What you can expect



Budget funding to enable completion of Local & Regional Water Supply Plans among every Virginia county, city, and town



Bills to:

1. Require reporting of data center water use to DEQ, and
2. Require public disclosure of water use by data centers

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CONTACT



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AmericanRivers.org



**AMERICAN
RIVERS**

Life Depends on RiversSM

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Access to the Outdoors

Maribel Castañeda
Our Virginia Outdoors



THE ISSUE

- Virginia lacks a dedicated source of funding to support Virginia's outdoors spaces.
- Underfunded programs are not able to keep up with the demand for trails, parks, public lands and the staff and infrastructure needed so that people can use them.
- Virginia ranks near the bottom compared to other states' spending on natural resources.

“91% of Virginians support public spending to prevent the loss of natural areas and open spaces.”

VIRGINIA'S GREAT OUTDOORS ACT



PROTECTS vulnerable natural and working lands and historic sites.

\$30 M | Virginia Land Conservation Foundation

\$15 M | Land Conservation Grant Programs

(VA Battlefields Fund, VA Farmland and Forestland Preservation Fund, VA BIPOC Historic Preservation Fund)

\$1 M | Wildlife Corridors Grant Fund

IMPROVES Virginia's network of public lands and outdoor access for all.

\$70 M | State Park Operations

\$50 M | Capital investments in deferred maintenance and access improvements on public lands

\$30 M | New public lands

\$2.5 M | Get Outdoors Fund

\$1 M | Environmental education and literacy

INVESTS in a competitive outdoor recreation sector.

\$50 M | Statewide network of multi- and single-use trails

\$500 K | Office of Outdoor Recreation

Text your questions for the live Q&A to (804) 214-6737

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Maribel Castañeda

Our Virginia Outdoors

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www.ourvirginiaoutdoors.com

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Preserving and Expanding Tree Canopy

Ann Jurczyk
CBF



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

Need stronger tree canopy protections



- Localities have limited authority to manage tree canopy for the health of their residents
 - Preserve existing trees (only in PD8)
 - Replacement of trees lost to development
- Loss of US Forest Service funding
 - Urban and community forestry
 - Support two FTEs in VA's budget
- No mitigation for trees lost to road construction

Virginia lost nearly 50,000 acres of tree canopy in the Bay watershed to development over just seven years.

https://chesapeaketrees.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/download_links.pdf

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EXPECTED LEGISLATION

- Enable statewide adoption of incentives to preserve existing trees
- Remove the ceiling for tree replacement (establish a floor)
- Budget amendment for DOF for urban and community forestry

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CONTACT



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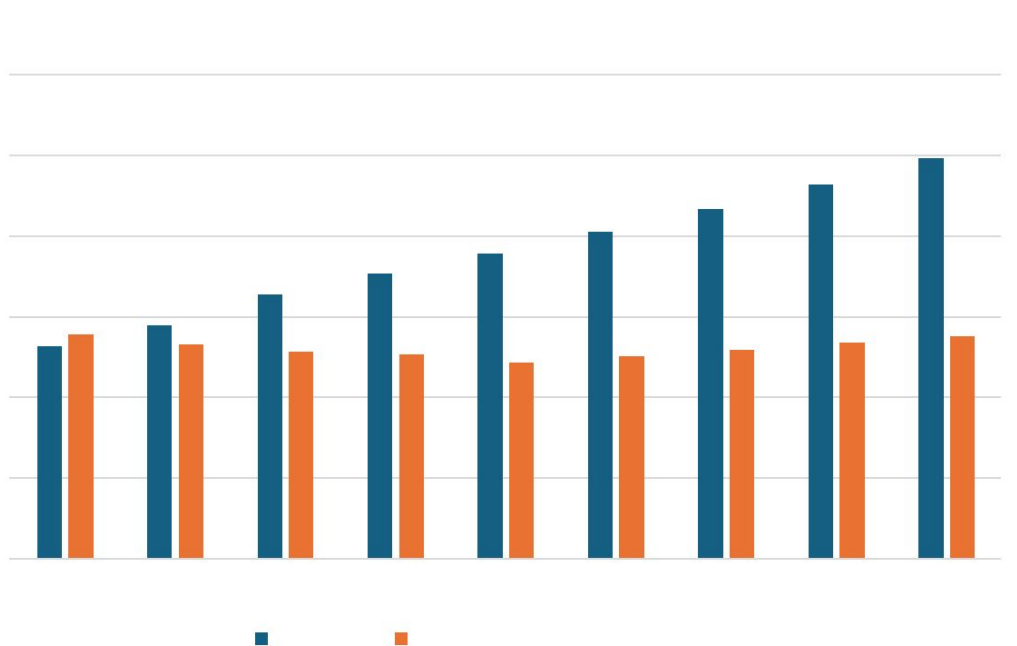
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KEEPING TRANSIT MOVING

Danny Plaughter
Virginia Transit Association



TRANSPORTATION'S FISCAL CLIFF



- State transportation funding has not kept up with inflation.
- State operating support ratio will decline from 26% in 2023 to under 14% in 2031.
- Issue effects more than just transit.

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LEGISLATION

- Comprehensive legislation to secure both a statewide, as well as regional fixes for transit funding;
- Target is to raise about \$500 million annually in statewide and regional funding for transit operating and capital needs;
- Statewide goal is: \$330 million annually in additional funding for the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund;
- \$150-200 million in additional regional funds for transit.

Text your questions for the live Q&A to (804) 214-6737

CONTACT



Danny Plaughter

Virginia Transit Association
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Transportation Produces Half of the Carbon Dioxide Pollution in Virginia — More Than Any Other Sector



25% of carbon dioxide pollution in VA is from the electricity sector



32% of carbon dioxide pollution in VA is from personal vehicles alone



Virginia needs policies to

Reduce personal vehicle miles traveled

Investing in more convenient, reliable public transit and access to safer biking and walking options will lower emissions, create job opportunities, and improve public health.

Transition quickly to electric vehicles

Powering an electric vehicle creates only 1/4 the carbon dioxide emissions of an average gas-powered one.

SOURCES

US Energy Information Administration 2020 Data
US Environmental Protection Agency Air Emissions Inventory 2021 Data
US Department of Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center

Electric Vehicles

Lena Lewis
The Nature Conservancy

Policy can improve access to EV chargers

The Branches: Public Destination Charging

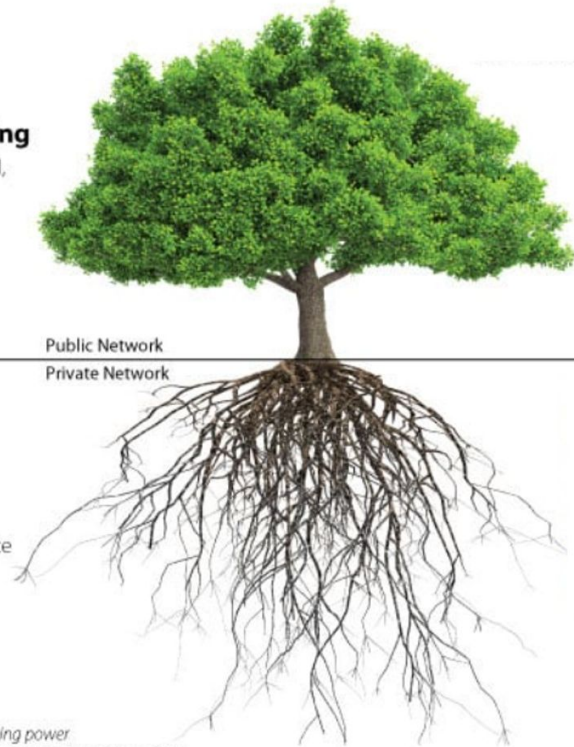
right speeding* for neighborhood,
office, retail

The Trunk: Public Fast Charging

corridor and community

The Roots: Private Charging

single family, multifamily, workplace



**Right speeding refers to matching the charging power provided at a particular location with the typical duration of the activity.*

NREL: The 2030 National Charging Report

20% of Virginians surveyed say **availability of charging options** is the **greatest barrier** to them considering an EV.

22% say **driving range**.

- Generation180

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Expected Legislation

- **Multifamily Housing Chargers:** Allow localities to require EV chargers or EV charger readiness in commercial parking lots by zoning ordinance.
- **Single Family Housing Chargers:** TBD.
- **All Charging:** Require utilities to plan more proactively for vehicle electrification.
- **Rural EV Chargers** grant and fund.
- **Medium- & Heavy-Duty electric vehicle** grant, including buses. funded by 25 cent delivery fee on large delivery companies.

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CONSERVATION
LOBBY DAY

FEB 4TH
RICHMOND



GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADVOCACY 101

Demystifying Virginia's General Assembly process to strengthen your environmental advocacy

See our Bill Tracker

ADVOCACY RESOURCES



EVENTS & ACTIONS



VIDEOS & GUIDES



FAQs





Virginia Conservation Network Bill Tracker

☰ Drag here to set row groups

Issue Area	Talking Poi...	Bill Nu...	Outco... ↑	Name	Last Action	Sponsor List
Transportation & La...	Support	HB285	Amended	Uniform Statewide Building Code; construction of bus shelters.	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Delores McQuinn (...)
Energy & Climate	Support	HB576	Amended	Contractors, Board for; required regulations and disclosures.	Governor: Vetoed by Governor	Jackie Glass (D)*, N...
Water	Support	HB673	Amended	Resilient VA Revolving Fund; projects located in locality having low ...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Michael Feggans (D...
Energy & Climate	Support	HB746	Amended	Energy efficiency programs; definitions, incremental annual savings.	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Mike Webert (R)*, A...
Good Governance	Support	HB906	Amended	Public utilities; municipal utilities, disconnection of service, consum...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Irene Shin (D)*, Phil ...
Energy & Climate	Support	HB950	Amended	Uniform Statewide Building Code; temporarily prohibit modification...	Governor: Vetoed by Governor	Alfonso Lopez (D)*,...
Energy & Climate	Support	HB1062	Amended	Net energy metering; eligible customer-generators and agricultural ...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Rod Willett (D)*, Da...
Transportation & La...	Support	HB1071	Amended	Speed limits; expands authority of any locality to reduce limit to les...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Betsy Carr (D)*, J.R...
Good Governance	Support	HB1157	Amended	Federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth; agencie...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Paul Krizek (D)*, Alf...
Energy & Climate	Oppose	HB1491	Amended	Phase I Utility; recovery of development costs associated with smal...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Israel O'Quinn (R)*
Water	Neutral	SB260	Amended	Va. Public Procurement Act; preference for goods produced in Virgi...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Bill DeSteph (R)*, C...
Energy & Climate	Support	SB271	Amended	Net energy metering; eligible customer-generators and agricultural ...	Governor: Acts of Assembly ...	Suhas Subramanya...
Energy & Climate	Support	SB313	Amended	Contractors, Board for; required regulations and disclosures.	Governor: Vetoed by Governor	Schuyler VanValken...



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vcnva.org/bill-tracker