

SUPPORT HB641/SB393 Virginia's Great Outdoors Act

Topic: Land Conservation

Bill Patron: Del. Paul Krizek (D-16) and Senator Russet Perry (D-31)

OVERVIEW:

Virginia's Great Outdoors Act (VGOA) would provide \$250 M in annual dedicated funding to invest in land conservation, public lands, trails, and outdoor recreation. It would be funded by a new \$3 per square foot annual tax imposed on data centers operating in Virginia.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- Development pressures to build more housing, energy generation sources, roads, and other infrastructure is threatening some of Virginia's most important natural and historic resources and working lands. **VGOA would provide the funding and predictability needed to accelerate the pace of land conservation in Virginia.**
- Virginia is blessed with stunning landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities, but unlike neighboring states the state has made little effort to invest in and develop the outdoor recreation sector. This is a significant missed economic development opportunity. **VGOA would fund trail development, improvements to public lands, and a new Office of Outdoor Recreation to grow Virginia's outdoor recreation sector.**
- Virginia's public lands protect nature for future generations and provide bountiful outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. But, Virginia has underinvested in public lands, leading to a large maintenance backlog for state parks and other public lands and drawn out timelines to fully establish new public lands. The longer this problem goes unaddressed, the more costly it becomes. **VGOA would address the deferred maintenance backlog on public lands and invest in state parks and public lands acquisitions.**
- All Virginians should have access to the outdoors and its benefits regardless of race, physical abilities, or income. Yet, historic patterns of inequitable public access to green space persist in both urban and rural areas, particularly in areas that are traditionally communities of color. **VGOA would fund the creation and improvement of greenspace in our communities and small grant programs that support outdoor access and environmental education for kids.**



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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.