

Healthy Rivers



Overview

Virginia's waterways and the Chesapeake Bay are critically important for a thriving Commonwealth. Healthy rivers and streams provide safe drinking water and allow residents and visitors to enjoy Virginia's abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. The Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) is committed to supporting sound policies and the funding necessary to protect and restore our rivers and streams.

OIL AND GAS

OPPOSE HB1678 (Robinson; General Laws)/SB1292 (Chafin; General Laws) & HB1679 (Robinson; House Agriculture)/SB1291 (Chafin; General Laws) to prevent fracking loopholes

- OPPOSE HB1678/SB1292 and HB1679/SB1291 which call for barring access to trade secret information, and negate three years of regulatory work on fracking chemical disclosure by adding a new mandatory trade secret exemption from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to the new regulations.
- A FOIA exemption would mean:
 - Localities, those responsible for emergency preparedness, and first responders could not access the information needed to prepare an emergency response – they must wait until the emergency is happening.
 - Landowners concerned about the chemicals used in fracking operations near their drinking water wells could not access the information.

Any FOIA discussion must address the significant interests of all stakeholders who participated in the regulatory process, including protection of: (1) Public Health, (2) the Environment and Natural Resources, and (3) Drillers' interest in trade secret information.

COAL ASH

SUPPORT SB383, SB1398, & SB1399 (Surovell; Senate Agriculture) for safe coal ash storage

- SUPPORT SB1399: Requires the safest and most effective solution for closing electric utility-owned coal ash impoundments across the Commonwealth with the requirement to excavate and remove the solid waste to a synthetically lined landfill.
 - Removing the source provides the best assurance of avoiding the risks of ongoing and future ground and surface water pollution, and catastrophic failures of coal ash impoundments.
- SUPPORT SB1398: Requires a detailed assessment of a coal ash site's conditions and closure options, so that DEQ has the tools and information it needs before a closure method is approved.
 - This assessment would include identification of any ongoing pollution from the impoundments and appropriate corrective measures, detailed investigation into excavation and removal and recycling options, and the identification of one impoundment site suitable for an ash recycling facility.

- SUPPORT SB1383: Creates the requirement that electric utilities treat and recycle as much of their coal ash as is imported from other states and countries into the Commonwealth every year.

CHESAPEAKE BAY

SUPPORT Adequate Funding for Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMPs)

- SUPPORT funding for Virginia’s Agricultural BMP Cost-share Program. This program is essential for meeting the Commonwealth’s water quality goals. Funding for BMPs includes fencing cattle out of streams, planting streamside trees and grasses, planting cover crops, and other steps.

SUPPORT Budget Amendments	Amount
Item 364 #2s (Senator Hanger) Item 364 #6h (Delegate Landes) Item 364 #5h (Delegate O’Bannon)	\$8.2 million from the Water Quality Improvement Fund reserve
Item 364 #6s and Item 3-6.01 #1s (Senator Ruff) Item 364 #4h, Item 364 #10h, and Item #3-6.01 #1h (Delegate Lingamfelter)	\$10 million in new funding from the second half of the recordation fee
Item 364 #1s (Senator Lewis) Item 364 #3h (Delegate Webert)	\$43 million in new funding

SUPPORT Adequate Funding for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)

- SUPPORT Budget Amendments C-48.10 #1s (Senator Hangar), 370 #1h (Delegate Landes), 370 #2h (Delegate Lingamfelter), & C-48.10 #6h (Delegate Yancey) for stormwater funding.
- Runoff from impervious surfaces carries pollutants into our streams and the Bay. Pollution loads from this sector have only been reduced marginally in our clean-up efforts, while wastewater and agriculture have made more substantial gains.

SUPPORT SB898 (Stuart, Surovell; House Agriculture) & HB1423 (Albo; House Agriculture) to upgrade Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) outfalls

- SUPPORT SB898 & HB1423 to compel upgrades to CSO outfalls in Potomac River Watershed.
- These bills compel any locality in the Potomac River watershed to bring CSO outfalls that currently discharge untreated wastewater directly into tributaries of the Potomac River during heavy rainfalls into compliance with federal standards. The City of Alexandria is the only locality with a CSO in the Potomac watershed. Amended legislation sets a reasonable deadline for the CSO outfalls to be in compliance with EPA policy.