WORKING TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Virginia’s environmental justice work is not limited to one particular community, pollution site, or infrastructure project. It involves an essential procedural framework and set of actions required to ensure that policies and programs represent and benefit all Virginians and do not cause disproportionate harm to low-income communities and communities of color. Environmental justice work includes ensuring access to clean energy for all, access to safe drinking water for all, preventing toxic pollution exposure for all, among other concerns, to allow all communities to thrive.

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ENHANCING EQUITY AND PARTICIPATION IN REGULATORY OVERSIGHT
Virginia’s public involvement procedures are unreasonably siloed and inaccessible; far from equitable or even useful for professionals and the public alike. Many local governments have continued to make decisions on non-essential matters during the COVID-19 emergency, despite the countless challenges of involving the public during a pandemic. Without legislative fixes, communities will continue to be left in the dark about local projects.

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ENSURING ROBUST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH VIRGINIA’S REGULATORY BOARDS
In view of the important environmental protection role served by Virginia’s independent regulatory boards, continued preservation and consistent enhancement of the current system, as indicated here, is vital to ensure all Virginians can enjoy, steward, and benefit from the environment and natural resources.

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CULTIVATING ENERGY DEMOCRACY IN VIRGINIA
An energy system that serves the public interest is one that protects the environment while also promoting economic fairness and social justice. To achieve energy democracy, Virginia must pursue policies that expand community influence over electricity sources, the siting of energy resources, and the costs and benefits stemming from those decisions.

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REFORMING ELECTRIC UTILITY REGULATION
The State Corporation Commission must regain its full ratemaking authority to ensure that customers never pay more than they should for electricity.

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BUILDING STEWARDS NATURALLY THROUGH EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Equitable and inclusive environmental education is necessary for an environmentally literate population ready to tackle the global challenges ahead. Virginia needs a coordinated, multi-faceted effort to accomplish this goal, led by state leaders in education and natural resources. Strong state funding is also needed to fill funding gaps and provide every student across Virginia, regardless of race or income, a meaningful environmental education.

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