

Virginia General Assembly

Each January and February, the Delegates and Senators whom we elect to represent us in the General Assembly travel to Richmond where they will meet for approximately two months and consider thousands of pieces of legislation and the state's budget.

Each year, our LRNow Board of Directors adopts a set of issues that have the largest potential impact on our work to protect and restore our waterways and natural areas in Virginia Beach. We work with our Delegates and Senators to promote these initiatives.

Below is the list of initiatives we will be supporting in the 2022 General Assembly session.

Funding

Allocate at least \$80 M each year for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) to invest in pollution reduction projects.

Support the funding request of \$2 M for the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP).

Plastics

Establish a statewide beverage container deposit program (often referred to as a Bottle Bill).

Consider a state-wide fee on single use plastic bags.

Establish a producer stewardship program targeting single-use plastic packaging and products.

Raise the Virginia Litter Tax and expand usage of funds to nonprofits which organize most Virginia litter cleanups and public outreach campaigns.

Tree Canopy

Expand on and build stronger protections for existing tree canopy, such as conducting a natural resources inventory as the first step in the site planning process to preserve existing trees.

Remove "Planning District 8" from *Conservation of Trees during Land Development*, which would enable all localities to collect fees to supply trees to community-based organizations to increase canopy on private property.

Amend *Conservation of Trees during Land Development and Replacement* of these trees during development process to give localities the authority to establish their tree canopy replacement and conservation goals to address equity in formerly redlined areas, increase flood resiliency, realize local comprehensive plan goals, and meet water quality permit requirements.

Resiliency to Flooding

Protect advances on reliance by codifying administrative initiatives, including operation and governance of the Community Flood Preparedness Fund; extension of the Coastal Resilience Master Plan to a statewide plan revised every four years; and adequate resources and talent to maintain and advance comprehensive resilience strategies.

Support policies and funding to protect families and communities, especially underserved and under-resourced communities, increasing community resilience statewide.

Create a Flood Insurance Fund to subsidize the purchase of flood insurance by low-income Virginians.

Access to Outdoors

Direct the Department of Conservation and Recreation to create a statewide outdoor access equity model with guidance provided by stakeholders.

Create a new outdoor recreation community access grant program that gives communities the ability to better plan their outdoor recreation infrastructure investments.

Expand the use of the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund to invest in community green infrastructure.

Fund public access infrastructure projects including roads, parking, trails, and facilities for disabled access at Virginia State Parks, Natural Area Preserves, statewide trails, and along bodies of water using \$115 M in bonds as recommended by Virginia Forever.

Offshore Wind Development

Enact policy that reflects the VCEA's intent for diverse and equitable hiring, with specific and measurable goals. This would include requirements that Dominion submit diversity, equity, and inclusion plans, including a workforce diversity plan addressing all CVOW-related hires across construction and the supply chain as well as a supplier diversity program plan.

Direct funds to be administered by departments under the direction of the Secretary of Commerce, to support clean energy workforce development programs that are accessible, affordable, and community-based, and provide the funds necessary to promote those training opportunities to the specific communities outlined in the VCEA (i.e., historically disadvantaged, veterans, and local workers).

State natural resources agencies should use environmental review processes to require avoidance and minimization of impacts to offshore, nearshore, and onshore habitats, and compensation for the impacts that cannot be avoided.

Environmental Education

Fund \$1.5 M in competitive grants through the general fund to be managed by Department of Conservation and Recreation, prioritizing underserved communities, to provide every student across the entire Commonwealth with a meaningful environmental education experience.

Fund an FTE to coordinate and oversee environmental literacy goals across the state.