LRNow 2027 Legislative Priorities

Lynnhaven River NOW | Board of Directors | November 2, 2026

Purpose: Establish LRNow's legislative and budget priorities for the 2027 Virginia General Assembly session and provide a framework for evaluating specific bills and budget amendments as they are introduced.

Flood Resilience and Stormwater Management

- **Strengthen flood resilience funding:** Increase support for the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) and sustain the Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund, prioritizing local implementation, nature-based solutions, and vulnerable communities.
- **Invest in stormwater improvements:** Support $50 million annually for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) and increased funding for the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP).
- **Modernize stormwater standards:** Support climate-informed precipitation data and stormwater design requirements that account for increasing rainfall intensity.
- **Support project implementation:** Expand funding and technical assistance for engineering, permitting, and construction of local resilience and stormwater projects.
- **Preserve RGGI participation:** Protect Virginia's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and its funding for flood resilience and energy efficiency.

Plastic Pollution and Waste Reduction

- **Local-option plastic bag ban:** Authorize localities to prohibit single-use plastic checkout bags while preserving the existing local bag-tax option.
- **Bottle deposit legislation:** Establish a statewide beverage container deposit-return program to reduce litter and improve recycling.
- **Producer responsibility:** Support policies that reduce packaging waste and hold producers accountable for managing discarded materials.

Tree Preservation and Conservation Landscaping

- **Stormwater credits for mature trees:** Encourage the Governor's administration and appropriate state agencies to develop and implement a clear, science-based pathway for awarding stormwater management credits for preserving existing mature trees during development and redevelopment projects.
- **Strengthen tree protections:** Expand local authority to preserve mature trees and tree canopy, and support state funding for community forestry programs.
- **Protect conservation landscaping:** Allow homeowners to maintain native plants, rain gardens, and other environmentally beneficial landscaping without unreasonable homeowners association restrictions.

Clean Energy and Responsible Infrastructure Development

- **Advance clean energy:** Support affordable, reliable clean energy, including offshore wind, renewable generation, energy storage, and efficiency.
- **Build the offshore wind workforce:** Expand workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities in Hampton Roads.
- **Promote responsible development:** Ensure energy generation and transmission infrastructure is appropriately sited to minimize impacts on communities and natural resources.

Data Center Accountability

- **Protect natural resources:** Establish appropriate standards for data center energy consumption, water use, and backup-generator emissions.
- **Ensure fair cost allocation:** Require data centers to bear the infrastructure costs associated with their development and operation.
- **Preserve local oversight:** Support responsible siting and meaningful local review of proposed facilities.

PFAS and Toxic Chemical Pollution

- **Reduce PFAS pollution:** Strengthen protections addressing PFAS contamination at its source, including industrial discharges, drinking water, and biosolids.
- **Prohibit paraquat:** Support legislation banning paraquat use in Virginia.
- **Strengthen accountability:** Support effective monitoring, enforcement, and polluter responsibility for toxic contamination.

Chesapeake Bay Fisheries and Wildlife

- **Protect menhaden:** Support independent Chesapeake Bay menhaden research, science-based catch limits, appropriate seasonal restrictions, and improved fishery monitoring.
- **Reduce crab-pot bycatch:** Support requirements for bycatch-reduction devices on recreational crab pots.
- **Protect diamondback terrapins:** Advance measures that reduce preventable terrapin mortality and protect their habitat.

Seabed Mining Protections

- **Oppose commercial seabed mining:** Protect Virginia's coastal waters, fisheries, habitats, and coastal economy from harmful seabed extraction.
- **Protect state waters:** Support prohibitions on commercial extraction of heavy mineral sands and phosphorite in Virginia waters.
- **Address federal proposals:** Oppose harmful seabed mining proposals in federal waters and pursue lawful state-level protections, including appropriate limits involving Virginia ports.

Environmental Agency Funding and Capacity

- **Strengthen environmental agencies:** Support adequate staffing, competitive compensation, and operational resources for state environmental and natural resource agencies.
- **Improve implementation and enforcement:** Ensure agencies have the capacity to administer programs, provide technical assistance, monitor compliance, and enforce environmental protections.

LRNow's Direct Advocacy Priorities

During the 2027 General Assembly session, LRNow will focus its direct advocacy efforts on three priorities:

- **Flood resilience and stormwater funding and implementation**, including SLAF, VCAP, CFPF, and effective stormwater management policies.
- **Local-option plastic bag ban legislation** to give Virginia localities authority to reduce single-use plastic pollution.
- **Seabed mining protections** to safeguard Virginia's coastal waters and marine ecosystems.

LRNow will also support the remaining priorities through the Virginia Conservation Network and other coalition partners, as opportunities arise.

Requested Board Action: Endorse these priorities as the framework for LRNow's advocacy during the 2027 Virginia General Assembly session.