



Advocating for Our Neighbors and All Creation

2024 General Assembly Legislative Priorities

Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL) seeks to partner with faith communities from every tradition across Virginia to advocate for climate and environmental justice. Our extractive economy threatens the planet with its continued dependence on burning fossil fuels for electricity, transportation, and food production. These activities release heat-trapping greenhouse gasses and pollution into our atmosphere, damaging our climate and hurting our water and air quality. We further recognize that these polluting industries have a cumulative impact, creating environmental justice concerns for our neighbors in vulnerable and frontline communities.

In 2020, Virginia emerged as a leader in the region by passing several bills focused on water and energy justice. During the 2022 General Assembly session, many bills were introduced that threatened to halt our progress toward this environmental and climate justice made since 2020. VAIPL, with our supporters and coalition partners, defended that progress and prevented a setback in the goals to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.

In the 2024 General Assembly, VAIPL will continue to prioritize environmental justice and support just common-sense legislation to strengthen and defend laws protecting the health of all of Virginia's residents to maintain our quality of life. We support the following policy goals:

- **Protect the health of all Virginians statewide by offering the option for a healthy communities strategy for our “localities’ and municipalities’ comprehensive planning**
- **Protect all Virginians’ access to energy, water, and gas utility services in times of crisis**
- **Increase Virginians access to affordable solar electricity for use in their home**
- **Protect Virginia’s water resources, increase funding for water infrastructure**
- **Protect the reduction of greenhouse gases in all industry sectors, especially in the energy and transportation sectors**
- **Defend the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) & Virginia Environmental Justice Act**

The following proposals include several bills introduced to grow healthy communities and advance climate and environmental justice.



Updated May 20, 2024

VETOED- Strengthening Environmental Health throughout Virginia Cities, Counties, and Towns

SUPPORT: Comprehensive plan; healthy communities strategy

HB 208- Delegate Shelly Simonds

Status: Passed the House and Senate, vetoed by the Governor

SB 596- Senator Lamont Bagby

Status: Passed the Senate & House, vetoed by the Governor

These bills would allow local governments, counties, cities, and towns, to incorporate an increased focus on community health into their regular comprehensive planning processes and efforts. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state which means local governments only have the powers granted to them by the General Assembly, If a local government would like to improve community health and environmental quality as part of their comprehensive planning process, the General Assembly should empower them to do so.

Incorporating community health into planning can benefit a locality by allowing them an opportunity to decrease community health burdens such as reducing pollution exposure, improving air and water quality, ensuring adequate emergency management, and increasing resilience to increased flooding and excessive heat.

[See our fact sheet here](#)

ENACTED- Protecting All Virginians' Access to Energy, Water, and Gas Utility Services

SUPPORT: Utilities, Disconnection of Service, limitations, reports, consumer protections

HB 906- Delegate Irene Shin

Status: Passed House, passed the Senate, amended by the Governor, amendments accepted by the legislature, enacted

SB 480- Senator Lashrecse Aird



Status: Passed Senate and House, amended by the Governor, amendments accepted by the legislature, enacted

These bills limits the ability of electric, gas, and water utilities to disconnect customers from critical services during extreme weather events or during periods of crisis by:

- Codifies temperature-based limitations on disconnections, including during extreme weather such as when a weather advisory or warning has been issued
- Ensures reconnection of services shall not be delayed due to outstanding associated fees
- Requires annual reporting of disconnection data, to better understand the issue

[See our fact sheet here](#)

LEFT OUT OF FINAL BUDGET: BUDGET AMENDMENT- Keep Virginia in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

SUPPORT: RGGI is law in Virginia. Virginia must follow the law, stay in RGGI, and properly allocate the funds generated rom RGGI auctions for coastal resiliency and energy efficiency, as required by law

[Item 366 #1h](#)- Delegate Charniele Herring

Status: Left out of final budget

[Item 4-5.12 #1s](#) -Senator Senator Scott Surovell

Status: Left out of final budget

VETOED- Strengthen Consumer Protection standards for residential solar consumers

SUPPORT: Requiring Board of Contractors to adopt regulations pertaining to residential solar

[HB 576](#)- Delegate Jackie Glass

Status: Passed the House, passed the Senate, amended by the Governor, House rejected Governor amendments, Governor vetoed bill

[SB 313](#)- Senator Schuyler Van Valkenburg

Status: Passed Senate and the House, amended by the Governor, Senate rejected Governor amendments, Governor vetoed bill



VETOED- Support Tree Conservation during land development process

SUPPORT: Allowing any locality to adopt an ordinance providing for the replacement of trees during the land development process.

HB 529- Delegate Patrick Hope

Status: Passed the House and Senate, vetoed by the Governor

SUPPORT: Allowing any locality to adopt an ordinance providing for the conservation of trees during the land development process.

HB 1100- Delegate Betsy Carr

Status: Passed the House and Senate, vetoed by the Governor

HB 170- Delegate Karen Keys-Gamarra

Status: Incorporated into HB 1100

ENACTED- Support safe mining practices in Virginia

SUPPORT: Allowing any locality to adopt an ordinance providing for the conservation of trees during the land development process.

HB 84- Delegate Shelly Simonds

Requires Public Notification of Mining Practices

Status: ~~Passed House, Passed by Indefinitely in the Senate~~

ENACTED- HB 85- Delegate Shelly Simonds

Prohibits use of cyanide in Mining

Status: Passed House, passed the Senate, enacted by the Governor

~~Prohibit natural gas pipeline expansion in Crater Planning District~~

~~SUPPORT:~~ ~~Ensure that these vulnerable communities do not suffer from additional pipeline infrastructure~~

~~SB 486~~ - Senator Lashrecse Aird

Status: ~~Passed by Indefinitely (bill is dead)~~



VETOED- Creation of Virginia Climate & Infrastructure Innovation Bank

SUPPORT: Creates the Virginia Infrastructure Bank

HB 968 – ~~Delegate Alfonso Lopez~~

~~Status: laid on the table in House Appropriations~~

SB729 -Senator Scott Surovell

Status: Passed the Senate, passed the House, amended by the Governor, Senate rejected Governor Amendments, Governor vetoed bill

ENACTED- Strengthen the existing Shared Solar program in Dominion Energy territory

SUPPORT: Amends existing Shared Solar Program, reduces minimum bill

HB 106- Delegate Rip Sullivan

Status: Passed the House and Senate, enacted by the Governor

SB 253- Senator Scott Surovell

Status: Passed the Senate & House, enacted by the Governor

ENACTED- Create a Shared Solar program in Appalachian Power territory

SUPPORT: Requires the State Corporation Commission (SCC) to establish a shared solar program for Appalachian Power customers

HB 108- Delegate Rip Sullivan

Status: Passed the House, passed the Senate, enacted by the Governor

SB 255- Senator Scott Survoell

Status: Passed the Senate & House, enacted by the Governor

VETOED- Require Appointment of Environmental Justice Council vacancies



SUPPORT: Requires the Governor to fill vacancies on the Virginia EJ Council by August 31, 2024 and clarifies some other policies

HB 333- Delegate Michael Jones

Status: Passed the House, passed the Senate, vetoed by the Governor

ENACTED- OPPOSE: Allowing Utilities to Fund SMR speculation with ratepayer money

OPPOSE: Allowing Dominion Energy to petition the SCC for ratepayers to fund Small Modular Reactor Development costs

SB 454- Senator Dave Marsden

Status: Passed Senate, passed the House, amended by the Governor, amendments accepted by the legislature, enacted

ENACTED- OPPOSE: Allowing Utilities to Fund SMR speculation with ratepayer money

OPPOSE: Allowing ApCo to petition the SCC for a permit to construct a Small Modular Reactor, and for ratepayers to fund the costs

HB 1491- Delegate Israel O'Quinn

Status: Passed House, passed the Senate, amended by the Governor, amendments accepted by the legislature, enacted

~~**OPPOSE:** REPEALING RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative)~~

~~**OPPOSE:** Repealing provisions that entered Virginia into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative~~

~~**HB 397-** Delegate Tim Griffin~~

~~Status: Laid on the table in committee~~

~~**OPPOSE:** REPEALING CLEAN CARS LEGISLATION~~

~~**OPPOSE:** Repealing provisions that allowed the State Air Pollution Control Board to set zero and low vehicle emission standards~~



~~[HB 3](#)–Delegate Tony Wilt
Status: Laid on the table in committee~~

~~[HB 7](#)–Delegate Buddy Fowler
Status: Left in committee~~

~~[HB 693](#)–Delegate Lee Ware
Status: Laid on the table in committee~~

~~[SB 3](#)–Senator Richard Stuart
Status: Passed by Indefinitely by Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, &
Natural Resources~~

~~[SB 53](#)–Senator Ryan McDougle
Status: Incorporated into SB 3, PBI~~

~~[SB 160](#)–Senator John McGuire
Status: Incorporated into SB 3, PBI~~

****Bills with ~~striketrough~~ are no longer under consideration by the 2024 General Assembly**