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

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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 limit 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 from 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

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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

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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 Lashreese 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

**SB 729**—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 Surovell
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 strikethrough are no longer under consideration by the 2024 General Assembly**