



Conservation Legislation Comments

2023 Virginia General Assembly Session

HB 2282 - Stormwater Management Program Exemption for Tree Harvesting

Please oppose HB 2282 as it would remove some protections from the Chesapeake Bay. Also, the amendment is deliberately vague.

This exception should not be granted. It would pave the way for forest loss with no environmental oversight for developers. There are already 8 exemptions in place. We should not keep chipping away at Virginia stormwater management measures designed to protect the Chesapeake Bay from excess sediment and pollution.

HB1785 - Speed limit in residence districts

Friends of Accotink Creek SUPPORTS Delegate Carr's HB 1785 which would authorize any city council to lower the default speed limits on any city-maintained streets in a residence district to below 25 mph, unless otherwise indicated by a sign. Lower speed limits would make our streets safer for cyclists, walkers, (and drivers). This is necessary because many areas in the Commonwealth have seen an uptick in cyclist and walker fatalities, and speed is the number one predictor of whether a traffic crash will be fatal. Please vote for this much needed, common-sense amendment to the Code of Virginia.

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H19/bills/HB1785/comments>

HB2189 - PFAS; requirements to test

Friends of Accotink Creek SUPPORTS Del. Rasoul's amendment (HB 2189) which requires industrial users of publicly owned treatment works to test waste streams for PFAS before and after cleaning, repairing, refurbishing or processing items that contain PFAS. It also requires prompt testing for PFAS following the discharge of certain toxic agents into state waters and requires the results of tests to be submitted to the coordinator of emergency services within 24 hrs.

PFAS substances or “forever chemicals” do not easily break down. They are used in many common products - non-stick cookware, food packaging, cosmetics, carpets, and waterproofing of outdoor gear. PFAS chemicals migrate into the air, dust, food, soil and water. They enter our bodies thru our food, water and respiratory tract. Most of us now have PFAS in our systems. PFAS accumulates in the body increasing the risk of illnesses which include liver damage, thyroid disease, obesity, hormone suppression, decreased fertility and cancer. The US EPA advises no more than 10 ppt (parts per trillion) and has made recommendations to limit the use of PFAS. Yet, the EPA recommendations are not mandatory. Hence, many states have regulations to restrict the use of PFAS. Virginia now has a restriction on firefighting foam, which contains large amounts of PFAS, and more legislation is anticipated to curtail the uses of PFAS in Virginia. Requiring the testing for PFAS in our water supplies is the VERY LEAST the state can do.

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H01/bills/HB2189/comments>

HB1510 - Urban green space

Friends of Accotink Creek strongly SUPPORTS HB 1510 authorizing localities to establish programs to grant tax incentives or provide regulatory flexibility to encourage the preservation, restoration, or development of urban green space (which includes street trees, city parks, sports fields, gardens, and greenways.)

More green spaces in urban areas should be encouraged. They beautify neighborhoods, provide for recreation, moderate high temperatures, filter pollutants, reduce runoff and improve water quality. Access to urban green space improves our sense of wellbeing. Greenways provide cyclists and walkers a means of safe and pleasant transport. No space is too small. How lovely to be surprised by pocket pollinator gardens in front of stores or at the base of a bare unsightly concrete wall! Please vote yes to Delegate Adam's bill!

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H10/bills/HB1510/comments>

HB1742 - Virginia student environmental literacy

Friends of Accotink Creek strongly SUPPORTS HB 1742 by Delegates Carr, Kory, Rasoul, Clark, and Adams to fund grants, on a competitive basis, to school districts seeking to establish and support environmental literacy.

Virginia is on its way to creating a green economy. The *2020 U.S. Energy and Employment Report* cites a steady growth in the green energy sector but a shortage of qualified workers. We need more environmentally focused STEM education to fill these jobs.

A report from Microsoft (Nov 2, 2022) [*Closing the Sustainability Skills Gap: Helping businesses move from pledges to progress*](#), states that we will "need people who can combine specialized sustainability knowledge and skills with varying degrees of other multidisciplinary skill sets. These will need to combine knowledge from STEM and other fields in the liberal arts and encompass skills that span across business, the use of data, and digital technology. This combination currently is hard to find and often doesn't exist naturally."

It is precisely these issues that environmental literacy programs in our classrooms would address. The key components of this well thought-through proposal speak for themselves:

Various state agencies would work with local school boards to develop and implement a curriculum from grades K to 12 aligned to the Standards of Learning and emphasizing environmental literacy as an essential skill and concept of citizenship. Such a curriculum would involve: (i) understanding the major environmental challenges facing the Commonwealth and the U.S; (ii) providing field experiences as part of regular school curricula and creating programs that contribute to healthy lifestyles through outdoor recreation and sound nutrition; and (iii) creating opportunities for teachers to improve both their environmental subject matter knowledge and their skills in teaching environmental issues, including the use of interdisciplinary, field-based, and research-based learning and innovative technology in the classroom.

Please vote yes to HB 1742 to address the knowledge gap in environmental and sustainability issues.

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H09/bills/HB1742/comments>

HB1645 - Litter tax; penalty for failure to timely pay

Please vote no for HB 1645! Friends of Accotink Creek STRONGLY OPPOSES any reduction in litter penalties. Reducing the penalty for late/non-payments sends the message that Virginia isn't serious about litter. Virginia's litter tax still trails far behind many other states' penalties and litter funds.

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H10/bills/HB1645/comments>

HB1721 - Public drinking water; study occurrence of microplastics

Friends of Accotink Creek supports HB 1721. Microplastics pollution is a growing problem. This bill would set up a work group to study its occurrence in the Commonwealth's public drinking water supply. The work group would then report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and numerous House committees by the end of 2023. Such information is urgently needed.

<https://hodspeak.house.virginia.gov/committees/H01/bills/HB1721/comments>

SB933 Single-use plastic carrier bags; local prohibition

Friends of Accotink Creek supports SB 933. Our natural areas are infested with plastic bags and plastic bag fragments. Please grant localities the authority to turn off the spigot if they wish to stem this form of degradation in our parks, woodlands, and creeks.

<https://legiscan.com/VA/bill/SB933/2023>

Friends of Accotink Creek

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