
2012 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

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3 Protecting natural resources and sustaining
4 efficient environmental stewardship is an
5 overarching mission of government.
6 Additionally, VML recognizes the
7 importance and challenge of maintaining
8 natural resources and managing
9 environmental services while
10 simultaneously encouraging economic
11 growth and greater human development in
12 our cities, towns and counties.

13
14 To achieve these ends, VML pursues these
15 goals:

- 16
17 1. Promoting environmental quality
18 through a coordinated, comprehensive
19 approach that addresses air and water
20 quality, hazardous and solid waste
21 management, protection of special lands
22 and features including biological
23 diversity, prudent land use policies,
24 noise abatement and energy use.
- 25 2. Attaining an equitable distribution of
26 responsibilities among governments for
27 resource protection and environmental
28 services, and attaining sufficient
29 financial resources from the federal and
30 state governments to implement
31 mandates, without duplicating efforts.
- 32 3. Recognizing the inter-jurisdictional
33 nature of many environmental resources
34 and pursuing dispute resolution for the
35 continued viability of natural, living, and
36 cultural resources and for the
37 sustainability of efficient environmental
38 services.
- 39 4. Pursuing the orderly and planned
40 development of communities and
41 encouraging the revitalization of older
42 communities.
- 43 5. Promoting cooperation and coordination
44 among governments, citizens,
45 institutions, and organizations to achieve
46 these goals.

- 47 6. Advocating legislation and policy
48 initiatives that provide sufficient
49 resources to implement the least costly
50 and most efficient mandates.
- 51 7. Encouraging cost-effective regional
52 approaches to protecting natural
53 resources and providing environmental
54 services.

55 **WATER RESOURCES, QUALITY &** 56 **CONSERVATION**

57 **Quality**

58
59 Point and nonpoint sources of pollution
60 continue to create significant challenges in
61 protecting water quality: wastewater
62 treatment plant upgrades, urban and
63 agricultural storm water runoff,
64 sedimentation, stream channelization,
65 specific agricultural activities, pet wastes
66 and indiscriminate use of agricultural, yard,
67 lawn care and homecare chemicals. Water
68 resource protection is critical throughout all
69 watersheds of Virginia. Local governments,
70 the state government, the federal
71 government and private interests must
72 recognize these threats and implement
73 precautions and protections that reflect the
74 level of responsibility for offensive activity,
75 as well as technical and economic
76 competence to correct problems.

77
78
79 Additionally, the federal and state
80 governments cannot ignore the financial
81 limitations that local governments face in
82 attempting to resolve these threats. Without
83 adequate funding sources and data to assist
84 local governments water quality will not
85 improve. Local governments managing
86 combined sewer overflows (CSOs),
87 including the cities of Lynchburg and
88 Richmond, require adequate federal and
89 state grant resources. Local governments
90 managing sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs)
91 also require financial assistance.

1 VML supports dedicated and adequate state
2 appropriations to the Water Quality
3 Improvement Fund to make full and timely
4 payments under point source upgrade
5 contracts with local governments.
6 Additionally, VML requests the General
7 Assembly to address costs associated with
8 the permit requirements of Municipal
9 Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and
10 new EPA regulations.

11 **Primacy**

12 The state should work to maintain the State
13 Health Department's primacy role in
14 implementing the federal Safe Drinking
15 Water Act.

16 **Conservation**

17 Overuse and indiscriminate use of water,
18 coupled with recurring drought conditions,
19 require state and local leaders to promote
20 water conservation to help to avoid future
21 water supply problems. Local or regional
22 comprehensive water conservation plans
23 should urge conservation through
24 construction building material choices,
25 native and drought tolerant landscaping,
26 appliances (such as dual flush toilets), rate
27 structure, education and water allocation.

28 **Conservation Easements**

29 Water authorities and similar local agencies
30 should have the power to receive
31 conservation easements under the authority
32 of the Conservation Easement Act.

33 The Virginia Outdoors Foundation's
34 operating costs should be fully funded.
35 State incentives (in-lieu of tax credits) need
36 to be created for local governments seeking
37 to place land designated for watershed
38 protection in conservation easements.

39 **Water Supply**

40 VML believes these principles governing
41 the role of the Commonwealth must guide
42 state water supply planning:

43 1. The availability of a safe, adequate and
44 reliable water supply is essential to the
45 public health and the economic vitality of
46 the Commonwealth and its local
47 governments. The state should participate in
48 providing funding mechanisms for local and
49 regional water supplies.

50 2. As a partner with local government in
51 providing water supplies, the state should
52 invest in regional projects to maximize the
53 use of infrastructure and minimize
54 environmental impacts.

55 3. Maintaining and analyzing a sound
56 surface and ground water database is an
57 essential state responsibility.

58 4. The state must take an advocacy role to
59 support local water supply projects that
60 conform to state regulations. This includes
61 taking the lead in negotiating multi-state
62 issues.

63 5. VML supports adequate state
64 environmental staffing in the areas of
65 research and development, including legal
66 research into issues such as inter-basin
67 transfers, which results in stronger technical
68 assistance to municipal government.

69 6. The State should encourage water
70 conservation measures to promote wise use
71 and prevent and minimize waste through
72 incentives and educational programs.

73 7. The Commonwealth should consider use
74 of reclaimed water to meet nonpotable needs
75 as part of its water resources to reduce the
76 demand on high quality potable water
77 supplies where practicable and
78 environmentally beneficial. State officials
79 should assist local governments and
80 communities in promoting wastewater
81 reclamation and reuse.

1 8. Managing water resources should include
2 protecting water sources by such techniques
3 as open space conservation easements held
4 by state and local land trusts.

5
6 9. Water is essential to a healthy ecosystem.
7 Stream flows to support beneficial in-stream
8 uses should be protected in the process of
9 providing sufficient water to meet public
10 drinking water requirements.

11
12 Local governments must continue to
13 participate in the discussion of any water
14 resource proposals, including the current
15 statewide water supply planning process.

16
17 Water supplies are important to local
18 governments for many reasons and
19 constitute a common resource that should be
20 managed as such.

21
22 **ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES**

23 The state should assist with paying for flood
24 protection where localities take precautions,
25 through land use controls, to limit the cost of
26 flood damage restoration.

27 Localities need increased funding for dam
28 safety updates.

29
30 In the event of an environmental emergency,
31 or an act of God, local government officials
32 need maximum discretion to determine
33 measures to be taken beyond those dictated
34 by the state and federal government, as well
35 as ready access to information and training.

36
37 **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

38 VML supports the continuation of certifying
39 compliance with local ordinances for waste
40 management facility proposals.

41
42 VML endorses developing local waste-to-
43 energy and co-generation facilities as
44 practical alternatives to landfill facilities.
45 To achieve these goals, VML asks the
46 federal and state agencies, as well as the
47 Virginia General Assembly, to fund research

48 into new technologies and processes leading
49 to the development of alternative solid waste
50 management practices.

51
52 VML supports efforts to ensure that Waste
53 to Energy (WTE) is consistently defined as a
54 renewable energy source in any renewable
55 energy standards relating to the
56 Commonwealth. Currently the Code of
57 Virginia defines "renewable energy" as
58 including energy derived from waste.

59
60 VML supports increased recycling and state
61 efforts to share best recycling practices, to
62 provide seed money for innovative local
63 recycling approaches, and to provide special
64 assistance to smaller communities for
65 recycling by establishing recycling centers.

66
67 **HAZARDOUS WASTE**

68 Advanced technology, waste minimization,
69 and waste exchange should be used, to the
70 extent possible, to eliminate or reduce
71 hazardous waste.

72
73 VML recognizes the need for hazardous
74 waste treatment and disposal facilities to
75 provide adequate capacity for wastes
76 generated within state borders. VML
77 encourages the Commonwealth to establish,
78 and if necessary, to operate, hazardous waste
79 facilities appropriate for improving the
80 treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous
81 waste generated within Virginia.

82
83 Adequate state and federal funding should
84 be provided for cleaning up abandoned and
85 hazardous waste sites. Expedient clean-up
86 of sites is essential.

87
88 The Commonwealth should address the
89 collection of household hazardous waste by
90 collecting it or providing liability coverage
91 for local collection programs. Consumer
92 education and discouraging reliance on
93 household chemicals should be encouraged.

1 The state needs to address pharmaceuticals
2 and associated endocrine disruptors,
3 including collection/disposition, and to
4 encourage pharmacies to accept unused
5 pharmaceuticals. State research institutions
6 should examine and provide policy
7 recommendations on the impact of
8 pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors to
9 water quality, agricultural products, and
10 human health.

11 **AIR QUALITY**

13 The Commonwealth of Virginia has an on-
14 going responsibility to continue efforts to
15 achieve emission reductions in accordance
16 with Federal Clean Air Act requirements.
17 VML urges the state to recognize the
18 efficiencies of certain low-cost pollution
19 control technologies, such as Stage 2 vapor
20 control devices, and encourages the
21 application of the requirements in areas
22 beyond designated non-attainment areas for
23 improving air quality and meeting air quality
24 standards by the federal deadlines.

26 When affected by regional short-range or
27 long-range pollutant sources, the state
28 should give an opportunity to participate in
29 developing a regional plan to reach
30 attainment of air quality standards, rather
31 than be excluded by arbitrary boundary
32 lines, especially in non-attainment areas.
33 The state should enhance and maintain its
34 acid rain monitoring network.

35 **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND 36 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

38 VML supports the renewal of federal
39 funding for parks, historical structure
40 preservation and recreational opportunities.
41 The federal Land and Water Conservation
42 Fund (LWCF) program provides matching
43 grants to States and local governments for
44 the acquisition and development of public
45 outdoor recreation areas and facilities. VML
46 encourages state officials to work with local
47 officials in combining matching dollars for

48 LWCF grants for local and regional
49 facilities. VML also supports additional state
50 funding for local land preservation through
51 Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
52 (VLCF) grants and matching grants to
53 localities for qualifying purchase of
54 development rights (PDR) programs

55 **NOISE CONTROL**

57 State and federal governments must assume
58 the regulatory and financial responsibility of
59 attaining satisfactory noise levels adjacent to
60 major highways and airports.

61 **ENERGY USE & CLIMATE CHANGE**

63 The state should maintain an overall state
64 energy plan that includes provisions for
65 energy emergencies. Regulations and
66 emergency orders should include
67 alternatives that consider the economic
68 impact on political subdivisions that border
69 neighboring states.

71 A balanced use of all energy sources should
72 be emphasized. The state should amend its
73 regulations and requirements, such as the
74 Statewide Building Code, to remove barriers
75 to experimenting with alternative forms of
76 energy usage in buildings.

78 Both long- and short-range energy usage
79 should be designed to maximize
80 conservation of energy resources.

82 Conservation should be the highest priority
83 in formulating state and local energy
84 policies and plans.

85 Virginia should require energy conservation
86 measures for all utilities operating in the
87 state. These measures will help the state to
88 reduce energy costs to consumers and
89 increase the available supply of energy
90 without further degradation of the
91 environment.

92 VML supports the creation of an
93 independent office of the consumer advocate

1 within the state government to actively
2 participate in transmission line issues.
3
4 VML supports state assistance to help local
5 governments, businesses and residents
6 obtain energy audits. VML also supports
7 state tax incentives for (1) energy efficiency;
8 and (2) homeowners using renewable
9 energy, including solar, geothermal, wind
10 and others.

11
12 VML encourages the Commonwealth to
13 develop building code standards that
14 enhance environmental sustainability and
15 energy efficiency and to enact policies that
16 enable local governments to promote
17 environmental sustainability and energy
18 efficiency in construction.

19
20 VML recognizes that the impacts of global
21 climate change, as it relates to relative sea-
22 level rise, habitat destruction and alteration,
23 temperature increase, and variations in
24 seasonal rainfall patterns, has the potential
25 to negatively impact our communities. State
26 officials should provide tools to localities to
27 take inventory of greenhouse emissions
28 output and assist with greenhouse gas
29 emission reduction plans.

30 **CHESAPEAKE BAY**

31 The Chesapeake Bay provides vital
32 economic and recreational benefits to all
33 Virginians. The Commonwealth and federal
34 government must assume responsibility for
35 leading the clean up of the Bay and work
36 with its local governments -- in addition to
37 the neighboring states -- to develop
38 interstate as well as intrastate strategies
39 designed to "Save the Bay." The
40 Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure, and
41 the state must work with the federal
42 government to ensure adequate financial
43 resources to implement the Chesapeake Bay
44 2000 Agreement as well as the
45 implementation plan for complying with
46 federal Clean Water Act.
47

48 The Commonwealth must continue to share
49 in the funding of local government water
50 quality improvement projects in Virginia at
51 appropriate levels designed to clean up the
52 Bay. The Commonwealth would defeat the
53 spirit of community partnership if it required
54 local governments to undertake unfunded
55 mandates designed to meet the goals of the
56 Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement.
57

58 **HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION**

59 VML is discouraged that modification to the
60 Federal Highway Beautification Act has
61 undermined local authority and continues to
62 allow tree-cutting simply for billboard
63 visibility. The General Assembly should
64 enact legislation that restores local
65 government authority to remove billboards
66 along federal highways through
67 amortization; supports local governments'
68 ability to require non-conforming signs
69 along federal highways to comply with size
70 and height requirements without cash
71 payments; allows local governments to
72 require the removal of billboards in
73 inappropriate locations, especially in rurally-
74 designated scenic, historic, and residential
75 areas; and provides local governments with
76 the authority by local ordinance to prohibit
77 the construction or to determine the
78 placement of any new billboards.
79

80 VML encourages the local identification of
81 roads with special natural, historical, scenic,
82 or cultural values and encourages local
83 enhancement and protection of these scenic
84 byways.
85

86 **TRANSPORTATION AND LOCAL 87 LAND USE PLANNING**

88 VML supports the re-initiation of the state's
89 former environmental review procedure for
90 state highway projects. VML recognizes the
91 potential benefits of such a procedure
92 including the benefits to transportation
93 planning and resource management.
94 However, any such procedure and/or review

1 is incomplete if it does not evaluate the
2 proposed impacts against the state-required
3 local comprehensive plans. VML believes
4 that the environmental review process for
5 public roads should incorporate the local
6 comprehensive plan and involve and take
7 into the account the views of local officials.
8 In all permitting, the DEQ should defer to
9 local zoning decisions prior to the issuance
10 of any permits. Moreover, in exercising its
11 permitting authority, DEQ should recognize
12 the possible cumulative impacts of its
13 permitting activities.

14

15 **HAZARDOUS LIQUID PIPELINES**

16 The Commonwealth and local governments
17 should adopt appropriate restrictions on
18 development near liquid pipelines and
19 require liquid pipeline operators to take
20 safeguards to reduce the risk of oil spills,
21 particularly in environmentally sensitive
22 areas.

23

24 **BIOSOLIDS**

25 VML supports and encourages the beneficial
26 recycle/reuse of biosolids on farms and as a
27 crop nutrient and soil amendment in
28 accordance with federal and state handling
29 and disposal regulations, and supports local
30 authority to monitor and reasonably regulate
31 biosolids. VML supports full compliance
32 with all applicable federal, state and local
33 requirements regarding production at the
34 wastewater treatment facility, and
35 management, transportation, storage and use
36 of biosolids away from the facility. This
37 includes good housekeeping practices for
38 biosolids production, processing, transport
39 and storage, and during final use or disposal
40 operations.

41

42 **GREEN BUILDING**

43 VML supports the construction of buildings
44 that are energy efficient, maximize natural
45 light, minimize stormwater runoff, use
46 recycled materials, and use other
47 environmentally responsible practices.

48 Local governments, state agencies and
49 developers can obtain guidance from the
50 U.S. Green Building Council and the LEED
51 (Leadership in Energy and Environmental
52 Design) Green Building Rating System.

53

54 VML applauds the efforts of the Virginia
55 Department of Conservation and Recreation,
56 the Virginia Department of Housing and
57 Community Development, the Department
58 of Environmental Quality and others to
59 implement green building design and
60 construction, and encourages greater use of
61 these environmentally sound and energy
62 efficient techniques. Ideally, all public
63 buildings should be LEED, or the
64 equivalent, certified.

65

66 **URANIUM MINING**

67 Uranium mining, milling and waste disposal
68 of generated wastes poses health and
69 environmental problems for Virginians.
70 Prior to uranium mining activities being
71 permitted in Virginia, VML supports
72 studies, including those currently underway,
73 that would evaluate the impacts of radiation
74 and other pollutants from mill tailings on (1)
75 downstream water supplies; and (2) the
76 health and safety of uranium miners.

77

78 VML supports the current moratorium on
79 the mining and milling of uranium in the
80 Commonwealth of Virginia until studies
81 demonstrate that it is safe for the
82 environment and health of citizens. Any
83 studies must include, but not be limited to,
84 modeling and simulation studies that show
85 the consequences of probable maximum
86 precipitation storms on containment cells.

87

88 Additionally VML recognizes the
89 importance of allowing sufficient time to
90 analyze the results of the National Research
91 Council (NRC) study to be completed in
92 December 2011. Any legislation to lift the
93 moratorium should not be introduced in the
94 2012 legislative session.