



BETTER COMMUNITIES THROUGH SOUND GOVERNMENT

## 1 2025 Infrastructure Policy Statement

2  
3 It is important that the State work with localities to encourage infrastructure development that  
4 protects the air, water, and lands of the Commonwealth. Localities and the Commonwealth have a  
5 shared responsibility to make sufficient investments in critical infrastructure through effective,  
6 economical, resilient, and equitable methodologies. Critical investments are needed to maintain  
7 and improve Virginia’s transportation network.

8  
9 The structural imbalance between critical needs and available resources persists. Even with past  
10 actions taken by the General Assembly to enact transportation and public transit funding  
11 legislation, the challenges abound for all forms of infrastructure.

12  
13 Financial constraints continue in transportation given the Federal Highway Trust Fund, which  
14 pays for roads and transit, is barely solvent, and Congress has proven unable to develop a long-  
15 term solution.

16  
17 While many cities and towns own and maintain their own roads they cannot do so without critical  
18 support from the Commonwealth as noted in the 2021 Joint Legislative Audit and Review  
19 Commission’s report on Transportation. Addressing the structural imbalance in transportation  
20 funding requires a shared state and local commitment.

21  
22 Financial constraints are common across environmental programs. Continued investment is  
23 necessary to improve water quality and drinking water, and environmental services that encourage  
24 economic growth and responsible human development in our cities, towns, and counties. Further  
25 investments in environmental infrastructure are needed to reduce nutrients which cause harmful  
26 algae blooms and fish kills downstream such as in the Chesapeake Bay. Reducing these nutrient  
27 flows is essential to meeting Virginia’s commitments to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

28  
29 Responding to continued and varied environmental challenges involves extensive local  
30 management ranging from reducing nutrient runoff, recurrent and riverine flooding hazards,  
31 changes in global recycling markets, and changing energy demands requires a strong State-Local  
32 partnership. This requires not only revenues but also necessary local authority to continue the  
33 work of meeting new challenges.

## 34 **TRANSPORTATION**

35  
36  
37 VML is mindful of and acknowledges the contribution of transportation legislation enacted in the  
38 2013 session (HB2313), the 2014 session SMART SCALE (HB 2), and the 2020 session

1 (HB1140/SB890) as important steps in addressing the transportation needs of Virginia’s localities.  
2 Future legislative and administrative initiatives should be based on these principles:

- 3
- 4 a. **Sustainable Funding.** A stable and predictable plan which is comprehensive, which
- 5 addresses investment across the state, and which does not rely upon general fund revenue.
- 6 b. **Fiscal responsibility.** Dedicated revenues, which are activity-based, will strengthen as
- 7 the economy does.
- 8 c. **Statewide focus.** Transportation is a statewide issue, not a regional, urban, or rural issue.
- 9 Every area of the state is economically hampered by insufficient infrastructure
- 10 management. However, if the General Assembly chooses a funding approach that
- 11 emphasizes regional efforts, then such opportunities should be made available across the
- 12 Commonwealth.
- 13 d. **Shared responsibility.** Transportation planning and authority are delegated to regional
- 14 bodies where they exist and to localities and independent authorities (like the Virginia
- 15 Passenger Rail Authority). These bodies prioritize and authorize individual projects
- 16 within their jurisdictions, an essential element of equity which requires coordination
- 17 among involved localities.
- 18 e. **Project prioritization.** VML supports the collaborative approach taken by the
- 19 Commonwealth Transportation Board to seek input from regional and local bodies to
- 20 develop a statewide prioritization process to leverage the highest value of scarce resources
- 21 by measuring targeted projects that expand capacity, address congestion mitigation,
- 22 economic development, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality. VML recognizes
- 23 the importance of having an objective, quantifiable, and consistent process that also takes
- 24 the different needs of regions into consideration and recognizes the significant progress
- 25 made on this issue through SMART SCALE implementation.
- 26 f. **Infrastructure modernization.** Our transportation efforts must include a comprehensive
- 27 statewide plan to provide transportation options for rail passenger and transit systems.
- 28 Such plans must ensure that all Virginians — rural, suburban, and urban – are able to
- 29 contribute to and benefit from statewide economic opportunities.
- 30 g. **Congestion mitigation.** Alleviation of commuter congestion is essential to economic
- 31 development to enhancing citizens’ quality of life and improving resilience to the impacts
- 32 of a changing climate. Corridor-wide solutions which promote alternative modes
- 33 including highways, rail, transit and non-traditional solutions still need to be developed.
- 34 h. **Resilience.** Decisions to construct or modify transportation facilities and other
- 35 infrastructure improvements must assess the benefits and costs of sea level rise, extreme
- 36 weather events and disturbances, inland and urban flooding, as well as green-house gas
- 37 emissions impacts on air quality. Transportation funding and plans must anticipate the
- 38 continued pandemics impacting how Virginians use the transportation network as well as
- 39 transportation revenues.
- 40 i. **Locally Administered Projects.** Any performance metrics tied to locally administered
- 41 projects or attempt to compare local completion of locally administered projects should
- 42 not diminish the ability of localities to continue to administer projects.
- 43

#### 44 **REVENUES**

45 Since the transportation needs of the state are so much greater than the current funding provisions,  
46 it remains essential that the General Assembly expand transportation and infrastructure

1 investments that are financially balanced, well documented and serves local, regional and  
2 statewide needs by:

- 3
- 4 • Raising revenue from those who use the transportation and transit systems;
- 5 • Identifying new revenue streams for statewide, regional, and local transportation needs
- 6 while preserving existing funding sources;
- 7 • Increasing dedicated funding for public transportation to meet transit operating and capital
- 8 expenses and make Virginia competitive for federal transportation funds;
- 9 • Providing or extending as a local option transportation impact fee authority to all
- 10 localities;
- 11 • Authorizing practical options for using long-term financing for major transportation
- 12 projects;
- 13 • Consistent with K-12 tax allocation loss, restore the lost transportation revenue as a result
- 14 of eliminating the State share of the sales tax on food and hygiene products;
- 15 • Providing full and equitable road maintenance funding, between localities and VDOT;
- 16 • Providing full state funding for the revenue sharing program as provided for in § 33.2-357;
- 17 and
- 18 • Seeking equity among various road users by ensuring that trucks pay their share of road
- 19 costs. VML also advocates for increased local influence when the state considers
- 20 mitigating negative impacts resulting from truck traffic.
- 21

22 Any attempt at repurposing state funds distributed to localities should allow affected localities the  
23 opportunity to provide input in the legislative process at the committee level when proposals  
24 directly impact annual transportation funding. VML opposes the redirection of the local share of  
25 state transportation funds distributed to localities across multiple regions for transportation  
26 projects in a single region.

27  
28 **Pass-through of Federal Funds.** Localities are often successful in receiving federal funds such  
29 as special appropriations and enhancement funds. These funds are passed through the state to  
30 localities and the transfer of these funds is often delayed. The federal government and the state  
31 need to streamline the transfer of these funds and allow localities to move forward with these  
32 projects. Additionally, localities with limited experience with federal projects should be provided  
33 training to reduce administrative risks.

### 34 35 **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION**

36 Multi-modal transportation improves the efficiency of existing infrastructure, improving safety  
37 while also decreasing green-house gas vehicle emissions. To encourage the continued  
38 development of multi-modal trails, paths, and infrastructure VML supports state and federal  
39 funding formulas that do not penalize multi-modal infrastructure that is not constructed adjacent  
40 to existing roads. Furthermore, VML welcomes additional state planning and resources to assist  
41 localities as Virginia and Localities seek to improve safety for all road users

42  
43 **Safety.** Given the rise in pedestrian and road fatalities VML advocates for increased state-based  
44 safety action through improving multi-modal including road safety metrics through targeted  
45 funding and facilitating innovative demonstration projects such as Smart City infrastructure  
46 technologies.

1 While the state and many localities have utilized the Vision Zero approaches to road safety  
2 through aggressive casualty reduction goals, coordinated interdisciplinary actions, increased  
3 priority and resources allocated towards road safety improvement, and an overarching policy  
4 framework there remains a strong need to improve safety outcomes further for all modes. VML  
5 supports a strong state methodology approach to transportation safety in state highway safety  
6 plans and encourages VDOT to collaborate and provide resources where appropriate to reach  
7 these goals and those prioritized by models such as the Arrive Alive goal Vision Zero.

8  
9 **Trails.** VML supports the newly created state office of Trails and encourages the development of  
10 more multi-modal transportation options, including but not limited to scooters, mopeds, and  
11 electric bicycles, at both the local and regional levels. This support is conditioned on local input  
12 and local rights, including regulation, on access to multi-modal facilities are recognized by the  
13 state. State funding formulas should not prioritize street pedestrian and bicycle facilities over off  
14 road facilities like the Fall Line Trail.

15  
16 **Pedestrians.** VML recommends that the Code of Virginia be amended to clarify the respective  
17 rights and duties of pedestrians and vehicle drivers. VML appreciates efforts by the General  
18 Assembly to require drivers to stop, not just yield, for pedestrians in all marked and unmarked  
19 crosswalks. In addition, police need the ability to issue simpler citations than currently allowed  
20 under Virginia law to enforce the laws more effectively against jay walking.

21  
22 VML supports maintaining the authority of localities to design, upgrade, improve, and maintain  
23 crosswalks on locally owned and maintained streets and rights of way.

24  
25 **Bicycling.** VML recommends changes to the Code of Virginia updating the rights and  
26 responsibilities of drivers and bicyclists in their use of public streets in order to ensure the safety  
27 of all road users.

28  
29 **Traffic Calming.** VML supports continued improvements to VDOT’s traffic calming program to  
30 improve safety for users of public streets. Additionally, VML has supported, and continues to  
31 support, expanding the availability of photo-camera traffic enforcement for all localities in the  
32 context of a defined transportation safety program that includes engineering, enforcement,  
33 education, and emergency response elements while respecting civil rights. VML supports local  
34 authority to deploy new and innovative technologies such as license plate reader technology on  
35 locally owned rights of way. VML also supports the authority of localities to regulate towing that  
36 takes place within jurisdictional boundaries.

37  
38 **Accessibility and Public Spaces.** Streets do much more than move cars; they often define  
39 community character and serve as important public spaces. Small towns and larger cities alike are  
40 using complete streets policies to reclaim public space and solve traffic problems at the same  
41 time. Many complete street solutions are low-cost—some are as simple as changing paint-striping  
42 on pavement. VML supports securing mainstream transportation funds for non-motorized  
43 improvements and policy changes that result in construction of complete streets and improved  
44 bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the existing right of way.

1 **TRANSPORATION EMERGING TECHONOLOGIES**

2  
3 **Transportation Network Companies.** VML supports state licensing of Internet-based  
4 transportation network companies (TNCs) as contained in HB 1662 (2015 session) which  
5 establishes safety and insurance standards for vehicles and drivers.  
6

7 **Personal Delivery Devices.** Autonomous delivery devices often operating as “personal delivery  
8 devices” have legal authority to operate on sidewalks owned and maintained by local  
9 governments. VML supports local control of locally owned sidewalks and the authority of  
10 localities to regulate, tax, license, and prohibit the use of devices on sidewalks.  
11

12 **Advanced Air Mobility** Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) uses electric Vertical Takeoff and  
13 Landing aircraft to provide short, quiet, carbon-free flights within cities and suburbs and between  
14 rural areas and urban centers. They will also fly between city pairs and rural airports at shorter  
15 distances currently not served by airlines. VML expects our citizens will demand access to AAM,  
16 expects AAM to provide significant economic development opportunities, expects AAM will help  
17 relieve traffic congestion on Virginia’s streets and roads and will reduce carbon emissions related  
18 to transportation. VML supports Virginia being a leader in developing AAM, so long as the  
19 development is carried out in a manner that helps this transportation technology exist  
20 harmoniously with the mix of land uses found in Virginia’s localities.  
21

22 **Technological Innovation.** VML supports research and implementation of new technologies that  
23 increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of the transportation system. Such technologies  
24 should not create additional fiscal burdens or bypass local decision making.  
25

26 **Electric Vehicles and EV Charging Stations.** Virginia expects to continue seeing growth in the  
27 number of electric vehicles traveling on local roads and state highways. Growth in the number of  
28 electric vehicles will help reduce nitrogen oxides and other air pollutants. However, the quickly  
29 growing electronic vehicle market also increases the demand for electric vehicle charging  
30 stations. Virginia should continue working with the private sector to provide funds to develop a  
31 statewide EV charging network and with localities to provide funding support for electric public  
32 transit vehicles and other municipally owned vehicles. VML believes localities should play a role  
33 in the siting, construction, and provision of electric vehicle charging stations and the necessary  
34 local authority to achieve this goal as the State and Federal Government seek to expand and  
35 improve electric vehicle charging networks  
36

37 **Preservation of Rights of Way.** Transportation projects take many years from the planning stage  
38 to construction. Localities need additional authority to reserve miles of right-of-way years in  
39 advance of any funding availability for these projects, or risk development in the path of these  
40 transportation projects.  
41

42 **Transportation and Local Land Use Planning.** VML supports the re-initiation of the state's  
43 former environmental review procedure for state highway projects. VML recognizes the potential  
44 benefits of such a procedure including the benefits to transportation planning and resource  
45 management.  
46

1 However, any such procedure or review is incomplete if it does not evaluate the proposed impacts  
2 against the state-required local comprehensive plans. VML believes that the environmental review  
3 process for public roads should incorporate the local comprehensive plan and involve and take  
4 into account the views of local officials.

5  
6 **Highway Beautification.** VML is discouraged that modification to the Federal Highway  
7 Beautification Act has undermined local authority and continues to allow tree-cutting simply for  
8 billboard visibility.

9  
10 The General Assembly should enact legislation that restores local government authority to remove  
11 billboards along federal highways through amortization; supports local governments' ability to  
12 require non-conforming signs along federal highways to comply with size and height  
13 requirements without cash payments; allows local governments to require the removal of  
14 billboards in inappropriate locations, especially in rurally-designated scenic, historic, and  
15 residential areas; and provides local governments with the authority by local ordinance to prohibit  
16 the construction or to determine the placement of any new billboards.

17  
18 VML encourages the local identification of roads with special natural, historical, scenic, or  
19 cultural values and encourages local enhancement and protection of these scenic byways.

20  
21 **Technical Assistance.** Smaller communities and regions require additional and enhanced  
22 transportation planning and technical assistance from the state. This includes establishing  
23 equitable equipment rental rates and administrative costs.

24  
25 **Metropolitan Planning Organizations.** VML opposes broadening MPO voting membership to  
26 include private sector representatives. VML believes that representation by public officials makes  
27 MPOs accountable to citizens. VML supports inclusion of the representation of independent  
28 authorities like the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority in the local MPO's in which they have  
29 projects.

## 30 31 **PUBLIC TRANSIT**

32  
33 Mass transit is critical to the state's economy and the quality of life for all Virginians. Public  
34 transit includes all available multiple occupancy vehicle services and technologies designed to  
35 transport passengers on local and regional routes.

36  
37 VML supports:

- 38 1. increased federal and state funding for public transit;
- 39 2. policies that allow for the equitable distribution of such funding;
- 40 3. a dedicated source of funding to support public transit; and
- 41 4. state legislation to provide localities with additional taxing authority to adopt regionally-  
42 based or local taxes to address transit capital needs.

43  
44 VML also appreciates congressional actions taken to restore and make permanent the \$260 per  
45 month parity between employer-sponsored benefits for parking and for mass transit riders. (The

1 federal tax deduction taken by employers for providing these benefits ended under the Tax Cuts  
2 and Job Act enacted in December 2017.)

3  
4 WMATA is an important piece to a healthy economy in Virginia and as a critical component of  
5 the transportation network. VML supports policies that ensure WMATA operations are safe,  
6 reliable, and financially sound.

7  
8 **Rail Transportation.** VML recommends the responsible expansion of interstate and intra-state  
9 passenger and freight rail service corridors, with no requirement for local match to provide  
10 transportation alternatives, and to help to stimulate economic development and tourism.

11  
12 Federal agencies, State government and railroad executives must work cooperatively with local  
13 officials to improve and enhance railroad maintenance, safety, traffic, emergency response and  
14 conflicts (for example blockages at at-grade crossings).

15  
16 The Commonwealth needs to:

- 17 • Work with railroad executives to provide greater access for passenger service (for  
18 commuters and tourists).
- 19 • Strengthen funding for cost-effective, long range, energy efficient and environmentally  
20 sound intercity passenger service and high-speed rail operations to complement federal  
21 construction funding.
- 22 • Work with surrounding states to foster greater interstate passenger rail service and to  
23 promote the development of the Northeast high-speed rail corridor, the New York to  
24 Atlanta corridor and services to Western Virginia, where these systems provide meaningful  
25 reduction of travel times, higher than historic reliability and needed coverage to vital  
26 business districts which are in close proximity to population centers.

27  
28 VML believes the state needs to work with federal agencies, independent authorities (like  
29 commuter rail) and rail executives and the commuter rail system to permit commuter system  
30 extension and expansion throughout the Commonwealth, as well as transportation innovations  
31 that improve the long-range safety and speed of service and to develop a source of funds to  
32 accomplish this goal

33  
34 **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.** In recognition of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority and  
35 their role in improving and upgrading intercity passenger rail service across the commonwealth it  
36 is critical that localities retain local land use control and that the authority provide opportunities  
37 for localities to provide input on rail projects and improvements. It is also important to consider  
38 using right of way for multi-modal transportation corridors along right of way that is acquired by  
39 the Authority.

40  
41 **Air Transportation.** VML wants the state and federal governments to actively work to develop  
42 and sustain comprehensive air service throughout the Commonwealth, connecting it to the mid-  
43 Atlantic region as well as the entire country. Additionally, VML wants the state and federal  
44 government to invest in and deploy new technologies intended to improve air service and safety.

1 The federal government is urged to appropriate federal funds for airport infrastructure  
2 improvements at authorized levels and to develop a national airport access strategy intended to  
3 stimulate local economic development opportunities. Additionally, the state is urged to  
4 complement federal infrastructure investments as well as expand state support for capital  
5 improvements.

6  
7 **Ports and Water Transportation.** VML requests the protection and promotion of an effective  
8 port and water transportation system by:

- 9 a) developing alternative water transportation mechanisms to alleviate congestion, such as  
10 ferries, which will move people, goods and vehicles as an alternative to road travel;
- 11 b) enhancing rail service to move goods in and out of ports;
- 12 c) deepening major water ports and navigable rivers;
- 13 d) relieving congestion in the ports by enhancing rail and highway access out of ports; and
- 14 e) developing policies on the disposal/reuse of shipping containers.

15  
16 Concerning the deepening of channels, VML requests the state to work closely with local  
17 governments regarding spoils disposal from channel deepening.

18  
19 The revenues derived from Virginia’s public ports are dedicated exclusively to the state. Some  
20 portion should be shared with localities to account for street and road maintenance and police and  
21 fire protection services directly related to the impacts of tax-exempt port properties.

22  
23 VML urges a significant study of the state’s water transportation system, including the expanded  
24 use of barge traffic for freight transportation.

## 25 26 **Regional Transportation Authorities**

27  
28 **Facilities.** VML supports by-right authority for the creation of regional transportation authorities  
29 to promote coordination of transportation and related facilities.

30  
31 **Town voting membership.** VML supports town voting membership on regional transportation  
32 authorities

33  
34 **Protective floor gas tax.** VML thanks the General Assembly for amending Code of Virginia §  
35 58.1-2295 to establish a protective floor price for the 2.1 percent regional gas tax, much as was  
36 done for the statewide fuels tax in §58.1-2217. Such a floor concept is essential to provide a more  
37 stable, dedicated revenue source needed for long-term financing of regional projects as well as  
38 bus and commuter rail operations.

39  
40 **Annual Adjustment for Inflation.** VML thanks the General Assembly for amending §58.1-2217  
41 to ensure the motor fuels tax grows with the rate of inflation as measured by the U.S. Department  
42 of Labor. This will ensure transportation revenues keeps up with the increasing cost of goods and  
43 services.



1 **Environmental Quality**

2  
3 Protecting natural resources and sustaining efficient environmental stewardship is an overarching  
4 mission of government. Additionally, VML recognizes the importance and challenge of  
5 maintaining natural resources and managing environmental services while simultaneously  
6 encouraging economic growth and responsible human development in our cities, towns and  
7 counties.

8  
9 To achieve these ends, VML pursues these goals:

- 10  
11 1. Promoting environmental quality through a coordinated, comprehensive approach that  
12 addresses air and water quality, hazardous and solid waste management, energy  
13 generation, conservation and use prudent land use policies natural resource conservation,  
14 and environmental justice.
- 15  
16 2. Attaining an equitable distribution of responsibilities among governments for resource  
17 protection and environmental services and attaining sufficient financial resources from the  
18 federal and state governments to implement mandates, without duplicating efforts.
- 19  
20 3. Environmental resources cross jurisdictional boundaries and positive dispute resolution of  
21 issues should be supported.
- 22  
23 4. Pursuing the orderly and planned development of communities and conserving natural and  
24 historic resources by encouraging the revitalization of environmentally impaired and older  
25 communities.
- 26  
27 5. Promoting cooperation and coordination among governments, citizens, institutions, and  
28 organizations to achieve environmental policy goals while encouraging innovative, cost-  
29 effective solutions.
- 30  
31 6. Advocating budget, legislation and policy initiatives that provide sufficient resources to  
32 implement the least costly and most efficient regulations.

33  
34 **WATER RESOURCES, QUALITY & CONSERVATION**

35  
36 **Water Quality.** Investing in water quality infrastructure is a shared State-Local partnership. The  
37 Commonwealth owns our streams, rivers, and Bay; localities own most water quality  
38 improvement treatment systems and related infrastructure. Sharing resources and investment  
39 responsibilities leads to more cost-effective, positive outcomes in public and environmental health  
40 as well as to other natural resources, economic, recreational, and tourism benefits.

41  
42 The Commonwealth should recognize that the vast majority of publicly owned wastewater  
43 treatment plants have been significantly upgraded, many with among the most technically  
44 advanced treatment systems available. As such, the public wastewater sector has led the way in  
45 reducing nutrients that pollute local ponds, streams, and rivers. The Commonwealth should  
46 continue providing additional funds to the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) to ensure

1 that the Commonwealth can adequately meet its cost-share obligations for wastewater treatment  
2 plant improvements. Additionally, the Commonwealth should continue funding and requiring  
3 greater nutrient reductions from the agriculture sector.

4  
5 Point (direct) and nonpoint (indirect) sources of pollution continue to create significant challenges  
6 in protecting water quality, including wastewater treatment plant upgrades, urban and agricultural  
7 stormwater runoff, and other agricultural activities.

8  
9 Water resource protection is critical throughout all watersheds of Virginia. Local governments, the  
10 state government, the federal government and private interests must recognize these threats and  
11 implement precautions and protections that reflect their level of responsibility for preventing and  
12 mitigating offensive activities, safeguarding local public and environmental health, as well as  
13 maintaining the technical and economic competence to respond to and correct problems.

14  
15 In particular, with federal and state governments increasingly focusing on per- and  
16 polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water supplies, there will be additional regulations  
17 and technology requirements, such as setting “maximum contaminant levels” (MCLs), for water  
18 and wastewater treatment facilities, which will cost billions of dollars collectively to localities and  
19 public service authorities in both capital investments and annual operations. Additional PFAS  
20 regulations and requirements should be phased-in over many years. Local governments and public  
21 service authorities will have to have significant federal and state financial assistance to comply  
22 with additional PFAS requirements.

23  
24 Municipalities have made extraordinary investments and progress in reducing nutrients from  
25 wastewater treatment plants. Permitted waste load allocations to municipal wastewater treatment  
26 plants are central to localities’ ability to comply with current water quality laws and to  
27 accommodate future growth and economic development. The Commonwealth should support  
28 regulatory stability as to existing facilities and their allocations. The Virginia Nutrient Credit  
29 Exchange Program should continue as the primary vehicle for new public or private sources to  
30 acquire allocations and/or credits with facilities owners’ consent on agreed terms.

31  
32 The state should be cognizant of municipal utilities’ and public service authorities’ reduced  
33 abilities due to lost revenue to undertake desired or required capital improvements to water  
34 quality treatment systems. Municipal utilities should not be subjected to mandates regarding basic  
35 operations of the utility’s business operations.

36  
37 In the interest of increasing and improving the level of water quality data for impaired watersheds  
38 and waterbodies in Virginia, the State should leverage and actively employ state university assets  
39 (laboratories, equipment, etc.) and subject matter experts (scientists, graduate students, etc.) to  
40 collaborate with local governments to gather and analyze rigorous water quality data. Such high-  
41 quality data can then be used by state agencies and local governments to document the  
42 effectiveness of locally specific water quality improvement plans, which are required of localities  
43 with MS4 Permits, and aid the state in its duty to monitor and track the health of state waters.  
44 Recent years have seen significant improvements in water quality throughout the Commonwealth.  
45 However, without adequate funding sources and data to assist local governments and public  
46 service authorities, water quality will not continue to improve. Combined sewer overflows

1 (CSOs) and sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) are significantly expensive infrastructure  
2 undertakings, often costing hundreds of millions of dollars. Local CSO and SSO improvement  
3 projects are often mandated by federal and state law and regulation and require federal and state  
4 financial assistance. VML supports state financial assistance to local governments and public  
5 service authorities facing legislative mandates related to CSO or SSO management and  
6 remediation.

7  
8 VML supports dedicated and adequate state appropriations to the WQIF to make full and timely  
9 payments under point source upgrade contracts with local governments. VML recognizes the need  
10 for WQIF balances to meet contractual obligations to publicly owned treatment works. VML  
11 recognizes much of the reductions in nutrients in the Chesapeake watershed have stemmed from  
12 significant effort by POTWs. However, no single sector can achieve the necessary pollutant  
13 reductions to meet the 2025 Bay commitments. Further water quality improvements stand to  
14 benefit from an increased investment in agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs).  
15 Accordingly, VML supports directing funding from the WQIF for-agricultural BMPs to make  
16 further progress in meeting nutrient reduction goals.

17  
18 Similarly, reducing stormwater impacts is critical to improving water quality and requires  
19 adequate funding and resource support through programs like the Stormwater Local Assistance  
20 Fund. VML supports dedicated and ample state financial assistance to SLAF to address costs  
21 associated with the permit requirements of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4).

22  
23 Local governments are legally obligated to ameliorate water pollution and reduce its harmful  
24 effects and they are well-positioned to develop innovative, and meaningful community-based  
25 solutions. VML supports the ability of localities to employ credible and efficacious, low impact  
26 water pollution prevention and control measures without the additional burden of securing the  
27 prior review and/or permitting of state and federal agencies.

28  
29 VML supports legislation providing localities with greater authority to preserve trees and planting  
30 which can reduce the heat island effect while increasing quality of life, carbon sequestration, and  
31 improve air quality and create opportunities for developers and local governments to have more  
32 tools for stormwater and flood mitigation.

33  
34 VML supports allowing local governments greater flexibility in the reforestation, preservation,  
35 and management of urban forests.

36  
37 **Conservation.** Overuse and indiscriminate use of water, coupled with recurring drought  
38 conditions, require state and local leaders to promote water conservation to help avoid future  
39 water supply problems. Local or regional comprehensive water conservation plans should urge  
40 conservation through construction building material choices, grey water re-use, groundwater and  
41 aquifer recharge, rainwater harvesting, native and drought tolerant landscaping, appliances (such  
42 as dual flush toilets), rate structure, education, and water allocation.

43  
44 **Conservation Easements.** Water authorities and similar local agencies should have the power to  
45 receive conservation easements under the authority of the Conservation Easement Act.

1 State incentives (in-lieu of tax credits) need to be created for local governments seeking to place  
2 land designated for watershed protection in conservation easements.

3  
4 **Primacy.** The state should work to maintain the State Health Department's primacy role in  
5 implementing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Additionally, the annual funds  
6 provided to VDH by municipal utilities and public service authorities to ensure VDH has  
7 sufficient staffing to maintain primacy over the SDWA should not be diverted for other uses.

8  
9 **Chesapeake Bay.** The Chesapeake Bay provides vital economic and recreational benefits to all  
10 Virginians. The Commonwealth and federal government must assume responsibility for leading  
11 the clean-up of the Bay and work with its local governments -- in addition to the neighboring  
12 states -- to develop interstate as well as intrastate strategies designed to "Save the Bay."

13  
14 The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure, and the state must work with the federal government  
15 to ensure adequate financial resources are available to implement the plan for complying with  
16 federal Clean Water Act. At the federal level VML supports accountability and oversight which  
17 seeks to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in meeting pollution reduction targets. This will help  
18 localities address the expensive costs associated with the Chesapeake Bay cleanup.

19  
20 Living resources such as oysters, crabs, mussels, and underwater grasses are critical to water  
21 quality. Oysters and mussels in particular have the capacity to filter sediments and reduce  
22 pollutants. While reductions from sewage treatment plants and urban runoff are important to  
23 restoring the Bay, it will become increasingly expensive to reduce a smaller amount of pollutants  
24 from these sources resulting in a diminishing return for investment. Increasing those living  
25 resources that improve water quality should be considered as an alternative to or work in  
26 combination with expensive retrofits of urban areas to reduce costs and pollutants.

27  
28 The Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP III), with its 2025 deadline,  
29 is designed to bring together federal and state actions to reduce pollution in local waters and to  
30 improve the health of the Bay. While VML generally supports the goals of WIP III, it also must be  
31 acknowledged that it calls for often very costly improvements to locally-owned stormwater and  
32 wastewater treatment systems – thus underscoring even more the need for adequate federal and  
33 state financial assistance. Adequate state and federal funding is necessary to meet the 2025  
34 deadline and beyond.

35  
36 The Commonwealth must continue to fully fund the Water Quality Improvement Fund and  
37 provide financial assistance for local government water quality improvement projects in Virginia  
38 at appropriate levels designed to clean up the Bay and its tributaries. The Commonwealth would  
39 defeat the spirit of community partnership if it required local governments to undertake unfunded  
40 mandates for water quality improvement projects.

41  
42 VML encourages assisting in the progress towards a reduced consumer waste environment by  
43 invoking extended producer responsibility. We ask that producers and first importers of plastic  
44 products consider having a strategy for how they will recover or dispose, without cost to  
45 taxpayers, their products when consumers are done with them, as a condition of sale in a

1 municipality. This strategy should include measurable results, outcomes, and timetables for  
2 achievement.

3  
4 **Water Supply.** VML believes these principles governing the role of the Commonwealth must  
5 guide state water supply planning:

6  
7 1. The availability of a safe, adequate, and reliable water supply is essential to the public health  
8 and the economic vitality of the Commonwealth and its local governments. The state should  
9 participate in providing funding mechanisms for local and regional water supplies.

10  
11 2. As a partner with local government in providing water supplies, the state should invest in  
12 regional projects to maximize the use of infrastructure and minimize environmental impacts.

13  
14 3. Maintaining and analyzing a sound surface and ground water database is an essential state  
15 responsibility.

16  
17 4. The state must support local water supply projects that conform to state regulations. This  
18 includes taking the lead in negotiating multi-state issues.

19  
20 5. VML supports adequate state environmental staffing in the areas of permitting, enforcement,  
21 communications and outreach, and research and development. Funding for research and  
22 development is especially important in such areas as inter-basin transfers and groundwater  
23 recharge, which results in stronger technical assistance to municipal government and public  
24 service authorities.

25  
26 6. The State should encourage water conservation measures to promote wise use and prevent and  
27 minimize waste through incentives and educational programs.

28  
29 7. The Commonwealth should consider use of reclaimed water to meet non-potable needs as part  
30 of its water resources to reduce the demand on high quality potable water supplies where  
31 practicable and environmentally beneficial. State officials should assist local governments and  
32 communities in promoting wastewater reclamation and reuse. VML supports the deployment of  
33 proven, safe, innovative water reuse technologies to replenish aquifers statewide.

34  
35 8. Water is essential to a healthy ecosystem. Stream flows to support beneficial in-stream uses  
36 should be protected in the process of providing sufficient water to meet public drinking water  
37 requirements. Local governments must continue to participate in the discussion of any water  
38 resource proposals, including statewide water supply planning.

39  
40 9. The Virginia Department of Health should continue working with drinking water suppliers to  
41 monitor and study PFAS/PFOA compounds and their effect on public drinking water supplies.  
42 The U.S. EPA should be the chief regulatory agency to establish maximum contaminant levels for  
43 PFAS/PFOA. Virginia regulatory agencies should adopt U.S. EPA-established maximum  
44 contaminant levels.

1 **ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES**

2  
3 **Flooding.** Virginia is experiencing more frequent and often more extreme storm events. These  
4 more frequent and intense storm events often lead to major local flooding challenges to both  
5 natural stream channels and stormwater infrastructure. Local, recurrent flooding has become a  
6 major issue in low-lying coastal Virginia, though no region has been spared as severe precipitation  
7 events in all parts of the Commonwealth have resulted in growing stormwater-control costs.

8  
9 The General Assembly has focused more attention and dedicated more funds to address recurrent  
10 flooding issues. Most recently, the General Assembly created the Virginia Community Flood  
11 Preparedness Fund (VCFPF) to assist through loans or grants for flood prevention or protection  
12 projects and studies localities affected by recurrent flooding, sea level rise, and flooding from  
13 severe weather events. Money in the VCFPF comes from the auction of carbon allowances  
14 through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). This is a significant funding source, as  
15 hundreds of millions of dollars have been allocated to communities to study, plan, and construct  
16 infrastructure to alleviate recurrent flooding.

17  
18 VML supports a role for local governments and regional planning efforts in identifying projects  
19 eligible for administration of the VCFPF for local, regional and river basin flood mitigation  
20 efforts as well as a coordinated flood mitigation, response and recovery efforts across agencies,  
21 regions, and localities.

22  
23 VML supports continued policies and funding to support localities contending with growing  
24 stormwater and other flooding challenges. Such support includes additional flood-control studies,  
25 coastal mapping, updated precipitation forecasts, and local and regional planning funds and  
26 technical support. VML Supports the need for disclosure of flood history in residential real estate  
27 transactions.

28  
29 The state should assist through the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund and other  
30 appropriations with paying for flood prevention and protection where localities take precautions,  
31 through shoreline resiliency and land use controls, to limit the cost of flood damage restoration.  
32 Localities need increased funding for state-mandated dam safety infrastructure improvements.  
33 In the event of an environmental emergency, either man made or an act of God, local government  
34 officials need maximum discretion to determine measures to be taken beyond those dictated by  
35 the state and federal government, as well as ready access to information and assistance.

36  
37 VML supports a state requirement that rail operators serve on federally mandated Local  
38 Emergency Planning Committees.

39  
40 **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

41  
42 **Waste Diversion.** VML supports the continuation of certifying compliance with local ordinances  
43 for waste management facility proposals. Solid waste management facilities should comply with  
44 local ordinances.

1 VML endorses developing local waste-to-energy and co-generation facilities as practical  
2 alternatives to landfill facilities.

3 VML supports efforts to ensure that waste-to-energy is consistently defined as a renewable energy  
4 source in the Virginia Energy Plan and in any renewable energy standards relating to the  
5 Commonwealth. Currently, the Code of Virginia defines "renewable energy" as including energy  
6 derived from waste.

7  
8 VML supports state financial assistance in developing programs that reduce waste entering local  
9 landfills, thereby increasing their longevity. Such programs should emphasize processes that  
10 reduce waste, reuse materials, and recycle refuse.

11  
12 Plastics serve many appropriate purposes in our society, yet their use in disposable products –  
13 especially in single-use products – has become ubiquitous and their polluting effects have  
14 followed. These products cost localities dearly in time and expense needed to unclog storm and  
15 sanitary drainage systems, damage to mowing equipment, ensnarement in trees and other  
16 vegetation, and more. Further, these products accumulate in area waters and wetlands where they  
17 harm wildlife, impair outdoor recreation, and degrade into compounds which are known toxins.

18  
19 VML continues to support a local government's option to regulate the distribution, sale or offer of  
20 disposable and other such single-use products, such as straws and extruded polystyrene food and  
21 beverage containers. Exceptions shall continue to be made for bags and containers used for  
22 garbage, medical waste, and other refuse containment. As well as for disposable plastic wraps  
23 designed to ensure the safety and integrity of medical supplies and other sensitive products used  
24 in public health and safety, whose purpose and distribution shall be permissible.

25  
26 VML supports giving local governments authority to prohibit the use of expanded polystyrene  
27 containers for food service and to regulate the use of expanded polystyrene in food service.

28  
29 **Recycling.** VML supports recycling and reuse wherever possible to promote better and wiser use  
30 of our resources.

31  
32 VML supports the concept of a circular economy, which is an economic system aimed at  
33 preventing waste and the continual use of resources. A circular economy encourages systems that  
34 reuse, share, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, compost, and recycle to create a close-loop system,  
35 minimizing the use of resource inputs and the creation of waste, pollution, and carbon emissions.  
36 A circular economy can bring about the lasting benefits of a more innovative, resilient, and  
37 productive economy.

38  
39 VML recognizes the need for solutions to the problem of plastics in the waste stream to assist  
40 local recycling and solid waste management programs and the need for state or federal action to  
41 develop scalable solutions for plastic waste products.

42  
43 **Hazardous Waste.** Advanced technology, waste minimization, and waste exchange should be  
44 used, to the extent possible, to eliminate or reduce hazardous waste.

45

1 VML recognizes the need for hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities to provide  
2 adequate capacity for wastes generated within state borders. VML encourages the Commonwealth  
3 to establish, and if necessary, to operate, hazardous waste facilities appropriate for improving the  
4 treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste generated within Virginia.

5  
6 Adequate State and federal funding should be provided for cleaning up abandoned and hazardous  
7 waste sites. Expedient clean-up of sites is essential.

8  
9 The Commonwealth should address the collection of household hazardous waste by collecting it  
10 or providing liability coverage for local collection programs. Consumer education and  
11 discouraging reliance on household chemicals should be encouraged.

12  
13 The state needs to address pharmaceuticals and associated endocrine disruptors, including  
14 collection/disposition, and to encourage pharmacies to accept unused pharmaceuticals. State  
15 research institutions should examine and provide policy recommendations on the impact of  
16 pharmaceuticals and endocrine disruptors to water quality, agricultural products, and human  
17 health.

18  
19 Electrical and electronic products contain known toxic and hazardous components which must be  
20 tightly control when such products are disposed (e-waste). Most such components can be safely  
21 harvested and recycled or reused, reducing the environmental impacts of mining and producing  
22 new components from virgin materials, such as rare earth elements, which are increasingly scarce  
23 and costly to obtain.

24  
25 VML supports legislative efforts to increase the reuse and recycling of all electrical and electronic  
26 products, devices, and related materials, as well as economic and business development models to  
27 grow the necessary skill, capability, and infrastructure within Virginia to improve the ability of  
28 localities, small businesses, and citizens to recycle their e-wastes easily, conveniently, and  
29 ethically.

## 30 31 **PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

32  
33 **Expanding Recreational and Historic Sites.** As Virginia's population grows and diversifies, and  
34 as residential and other development expand into previously undeveloped areas, there is an  
35 increasing need to conserve open-space lands for scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, agricultural,  
36 reduce urban heat, increase urban green space, forestry production, and outdoor recreation.

37  
38 VML supports state funding at no less than \$20 million annually, as required by state law, for the  
39 Virginia Land Conservation Fund for local land preservation. VML also supports sufficient  
40 funding for the Virginia Farmland Preservation Fund and other such programs for matching grants  
41 to localities for qualifying purchase of development rights (PDR) programs.

42  
43 VML supports the renewal of federal funding for parks, historical structure preservation and  
44 recreational opportunities. The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program  
45 provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of



1 public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. VML encourages state officials to work with local  
2 officials in combining matching dollars for LWCF grants for local and regional facilities.

3  
4 **Noise Control.** State and federal governments must assume the regulatory and financial  
5 responsibility of attaining satisfactory noise levels adjacent to major highways, railways, and  
6 airports.

## 7 8 **ENERGY**

9  
10 **Energy Conservation, Green Building, & Climate Change.** The state should maintain an  
11 overall state energy plan that includes provisions for conventional and renewable energy; support  
12 for research and development into energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy  
13 technologies; alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies; energy infrastructure; and  
14 increasing resilience relative to energy emergencies.

15  
16 VML acknowledges passage of the Grid Transformation and Security Act of 2018 and its  
17 emphases on grid modernization, solar and wind energy, energy efficiency and conservation,  
18 weatherization programs and consumer protections.

19  
20 VML also acknowledges the Virginia Clean Economy Act of 2020 and its emphases on retiring  
21 carbon-emitting electric generation facilities and dramatically increasing renewable energy  
22 sources so that Virginia’s electric grid is carbon-free by 2050. The Act also expands energy-  
23 efficiency programs, increases SCC oversight of ratemaking and ratepayer protections, and moves  
24 Virginia to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

25  
26 RGGI has provided hundreds of millions of dollars since the VCEA’s passage for energy  
27 efficiency projects, especially to low-income residents, and flood-control projects. RGGI funds  
28 for flood-control projects have been appropriated via the Community Flood Preparedness Fund  
29 (CFPF). VML continues to support a viable RGGI program. Should Virginia cease participating in  
30 RGGI, then the General Assembly should replace the lost RGGI funds for energy efficiency and  
31 CFPF-funded flood-control projects from other sources.

32  
33 Energy conservation and efficiency should be major considerations in formulating state and local  
34 energy policies and plans, as they are often the most cost effective.

35 VML supports state assistance to help local governments, businesses and residents obtain energy  
36 audits. VML also supports state tax incentives for (1) energy efficiency; and (2) homeowners  
37 using renewable energy, including solar, geothermal, wind and others.

38  
39 VML supports the construction of buildings that are energy efficient, maximize natural light,  
40 minimize stormwater runoff, use recycled materials, and use other environmentally sustainable  
41 practices. Local governments, state agencies, and developers can obtain green building practices  
42 guidance from organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council which promulgates the  
43 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Certification System.

44

1 VML supports green building design and construction and encourages greater use of these  
2 environmentally sound and energy efficient techniques. Ideally, all public buildings should be  
3 LEED certified or its equivalent.

4  
5 VML encourages the Commonwealth to institutionalize best practices by developing building  
6 code standards that enhance environmental sustainability and energy efficiency and to enact  
7 policies that enable local governments to promote environmental sustainability and energy  
8 efficiency in construction. The Board of Housing and Community Development is to be  
9 commended for adopting the latest model codes for commercial buildings. Accordingly, VML  
10 supports adopting all provisions of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code for  
11 residential construction.

12  
13 VML recognizes that the impacts of global climate change, as it relates to sea-level rise, habitat  
14 destruction and alteration, temperature increase, and variations in seasonal rainfall patterns, will  
15 negatively impact our communities. State officials should provide tools to localities to take  
16 inventory of greenhouse emissions and assist with greenhouse gas emission reduction plans.

17  
18 **Renewable Energy, Solar, & Wind Energy.** Clean energy sources should be encouraged, with  
19 both long and short-range energy usage designed to maximize conservation of energy resources.

20  
21 The Virginia Clean Economy Act of 2020 sets the Commonwealth on a path to be carbon-free by  
22 2050. The act focuses on renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, distributed solar,  
23 offshore wind, and energy storage, among other things.

24  
25 Virginia should continue to allow and expand on renewable energy generation and the deployment  
26 of distributed energy infrastructure for all residents, businesses, local governments and utilities  
27 operating in the state. These measures will help to reduce energy costs to consumers and increase  
28 the available supply of energy without further degradation of the environment. It is important that  
29 net metering with retail compensation be retained or improved with the ability for production  
30 above specific site needs. Any claims of harm to the grid as a result of distributed solar should be  
31 accompanied by holistic studies which also consider the benefits of distributed solar.

32  
33 Virginia's utility-scale solar and shared solar markets will dramatically expand in the years ahead  
34 to meet clean-energy mandates. Expansion of utility-scale solar will impact tens of thousands of  
35 acres. Shared solar will be smaller in scale, but also will impact thousands of acres. Solar  
36 developers should continue working cooperatively with local governments on project siting,  
37 zoning, revenue-sharing, stormwater impacts on local water quality, and other matters as the  
38 renewable energy market expands. Finally, localities must continue to retain authority to make  
39 land use decisions about the suitability of solar developments.

40  
41 Additionally, onshore wind projects are expected to appear in Virginia's higher elevations. Such  
42 projects are necessarily large-scale and may visually impact scenic landscapes and avian wildlife.  
43 Onshore wind developers must work early in the project development process with local  
44 governments on siting, zoning, visual impact, revenue and taxation, and other issues.

1 Virginia is poised to host the nation’s largest offshore wind power project. The General Assembly  
2 has declared 2.6 gigawatts of offshore wind power to be in the public interest and that such  
3 amount of power generation be operational by December 2034. This offshore construction project  
4 will be some 27 miles off Virginia Beach’s coast. As the project is planned and constructed, the  
5 Commonwealth and the project’s utility owner should continue working closely with coastal  
6 communities who may be impacted by and benefit from it.

7  
8 Additionally, the General Assembly and the State Corporation Commission should continue  
9 monitoring potential impacts to ratepayers, especially to ensure that low-income Virginians are  
10 not disproportionately impacted by rate increases.

11  
12 VML supports efforts to protect current net metering compensation and to allow for increased  
13 system capacity purchased to reflect future needs. The current limitations on non-utility scale  
14 photo voltaic generation system size should be examined for removal of restrictions. VML  
15 requests provisions for true community solar to be allowed to gain a broader set of customers for  
16 solar energy, including third-party owned and financed community solar.

17  
18 VML supports the creation of an independent office of the consumer advocate within the state  
19 government to actively participate in the siting of gas, liquid, and electric transmission lines.

## 20 21 **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

22 VML supports the fair treatment and full participation of all people, regardless of race, color,  
23 national origin, faith, disability, or income in the transparent development, implementation, and  
24 enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

25  
26 Communities of color and low-income communities, generally referred to as environmental  
27 justice communities, have often been disproportionately negatively impacted by development of  
28 environmental policies and programs and in the siting of major public and private infrastructure  
29 projects and other developments. Environmental justice communities often have unique  
30 environmental and historic challenges as a result of major infrastructure projects.

31  
32 Local governments have principal authority over local land use. Local governments also have  
33 specific and important insights on proposed environmental policies and programs and on  
34 development’s environmental, social, cultural, and economic impact.

35  
36 VML believes localities can and should play a more collaborative role in the development of state  
37 environmental policies and programs and in determining infrastructure site suitability. Local  
38 governments have a clear interest in protecting their local vulnerable communities from  
39 disproportionate environmental and health impacts.

40  
41 Environmental justice considerations are especially important when it comes to state regulatory  
42 processes for permitting major proposed public and private infrastructure that is to have public  
43 benefit. Examples of such infrastructure include transportation facilities, electric generation and  
44 transmission facilities, solid waste facilities, and pipelines. As the state through its environmental  
45 regulatory boards and agencies increases its focus on environmental justice matters – especially  
46 on infrastructure siting and permitting – it is imperative that the state collaborate with local

1 governments, especially in a project’s pre-planning and planning stages. In such early  
2 collaboration, it is important that the state ensure the locality has all relevant information and  
3 other subject resources so that the locality may meaningfully contribute to state’s planning and  
4 other regulatory processes and promote fair treatment.

5  
6 **Role of Local Land Use Decisions.** In all permitting, the DEQ should defer to local zoning  
7 decisions prior to the issuance of any permits. Moreover, in exercising its permitting authority,  
8 DEQ should recognize the possible cumulative impacts of its permitting activities.

9  
10 **HAZARDOUS LIQUID AND GAS PIPELINES**

11 The Commonwealth and local governments should adopt appropriate restrictions on development  
12 near liquid and gas pipelines and require liquid and gas pipeline operators to take safeguards to  
13 reduce the risk of oil, gas and other pipeline product spills and leaks, particularly in  
14 environmentally sensitive areas.

15  
16 **BIOSOLIDS**

17 VML supports and encourages the beneficial recycle/reuse of biosolids on farms and as a crop  
18 nutrient and soil amendment in accordance with federal and state handling and disposal regulation  
19 and supports local authority to monitor and reasonably regulate biosolids. VML supports the  
20 beneficial reuse of biosolids, to the extent that the environmental and public health scientific  
21 community deems such practices safe and subject to reasonable regulation. Biosolids are an  
22 important business activity for many municipal treatment facilities and VML supports their safe  
23 usage and reasonable regulation of biosolids.

24  
25 **URANIUM MINING**

26 Uranium mining, milling and waste disposal of generated wastes poses a threat to public health  
27 and the environment.

28  
29 VML supports the current moratorium on the mining and milling of uranium in the  
30 Commonwealth of Virginia until studies demonstrate that it is not a threat to public health and the  
31 environment. Any studies or efforts to develop a regulatory framework should address the  
32 concerns, warnings, and conclusions contained in the National Academies of Sciences report to  
33 the Commonwealth entitled “Uranium Mining in Virginia” and dated December  
34 2011. Furthermore, the state should take no action to preempt, eliminate, or preclude local  
35 government jurisdiction with respect to whether uranium mining would be allowed in the  
36 respective jurisdiction.

37  
38 **COAL ASH/NUCLEAR WASTE**

39 In order to ensure against accidental contamination of ground and surface waters, coal and other  
40 energy production by-products, utilities with coal ash ponds, the Commonwealth should continue  
41 requiring utilities to relocate coal ash deposits to a permitted disposal facility meeting Federal  
42 criteria for this class of waste. Reclamation of such by-product impoundment sites must be  
43 consistent with Federal mine reclamation standards. These requirements also apply to  
44 impoundment sites that have been closed by capping in place or have received approval for  
45 closure by capping in place. Such coal ash also, where possible, should be reclaimed for permitted  
46 beneficial reuse.