

VML General Laws Policy Committee Legislative Positions

Utilities

Many local governments own and operate utilities that provide services that may include but are not limited to water, sewer, electric and natural gas. These utility services are funded by localities both outright and as enterprise funds and usually have bonding authority and financial restrictions on their operations. Moratoriums on service cut-offs without proof of COVID-related hardship result in lost revenues that cannot be recovered from citizens who were fully able to pay for the service. Customers' bills become a significant financial hardship for them because they assumed the state was going to cover the expense during the moratorium.

VML supports localities' right to manage the operation of utilities without state interference.

Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Virginia FOIA drives and impacts localities every single day. Poorly conceived legislation can complicate and unintentionally thwart the timely delivery of public documents to Virginia citizens seeking information.

VML supports FOIA legislation review by the FOIA Council prior to enactment.

VML supports expanding electronic meetings outside of declared emergency periods with flexibility for localities to determine how to include public participation and public comment.

VML supports studying the cost structure of FOIA requests.

Collective Bargaining

Concerns about the increase in the cost of government, bureaucracy in local government operations, and more adversarial employee relations are reasons that VML has traditionally opposed collective bargaining.

VML does not support requiring localities to engage in collective bargaining.