



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF  
CONSERVATION VOTERS

**TO: Members, Virginia House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee**  
**FROM: Virginia League of Conservation Voters**  
**DATE: January 17, 2023**  
**RE: Virginia LCV Legislative Positions – HB84, HB85, HB309**

Today, January 17, the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee will consider the following legislation: HB 84, HB 85, and HB 309

**We encourage you to SUPPORT HB84, HB85, and HB309**

**[HB84 \(Simonds\) Mineral mining and exploration; public notification.](#)**

**This legislation would:**

Require companies conducting exploratory drilling to provide notice to local government and nearby neighbors 15 days prior to drilling taking place.

Reasons to **SUPPORT** HB84

- Notification would inform local governments and neighbors of mining activity that could impact groundwater levels, water quality & property values.
- This would allow localities or neighbors to make mining companies aware of any unique local considerations the company should be aware of prior to drilling occurring.

**[HB85 \(Simonds\) Mineral mining and exploration; public notification.](#)**

**This legislation would:**

Prohibit the use of cyanide in mineral mining. Response to recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences Engineering and Medicine that found "Virginia's regulations are insufficient to protect against the potential impacts of gold mining."

Reasons to **SUPPORT** HB85:

- Negative ground and surface water impacts are more likely to occur with the use of cyanide processing.
- Cyanide spills can ruin drinking water, destroy ecosystems and cause massive fish kills.

## [HB 309 \(Hope\) Forest Conservation Plan; Department of Forestry to develop.](#)

### **This legislation would:**

Establish the Forest Conservation Act. Requests that the Department of Forestry assess the health of Virginia's forests, determine how many acres are healthy and how many acres are at risk and why.

The primary interest of this act are areas adjacent to streams or wetlands, those on steep or erodible soils or those within or adjacent to large contiguous blocks of forest or wildlife corridors.

### Reasons to **SUPPORT** HB85:

- A baseline assessment would the state to identify trends and consider programs and funding to ensure Virginia protects its natural resources.
- Virginia continues to lose tree canopy, including intact forests.
- Forest loss hinders the state's ability to improve water quality, reduce flooding and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Intact forests not only provide habitat for wildlife, but also act as sponges, filtering water and slowing runoff into our streams, reducing erosion and sediment in our waterways.

If you have any questions about our position, please contact Michael Town, Executive Director of Virginia LCV, at [mtown@valcv.org](mailto:mtown@valcv.org), or Chris Leyen, Policy Director, at [cleyen@valcv.org](mailto:cleyen@valcv.org), or 925-354-1433 (mobile).