



VIRGINIA LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS

**TO: Members, Virginia House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee
- Natural Resources Subcommittee**

FROM: Virginia League of Conservation Voters

DATE: January 24, 2023

RE: Virginia LCV Legislative Positions – HB107, HB199, HB309, HB985

Today, January 17, the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Natural Resources Committee will consider the following legislation: HB 107, HB 199, HB 309, HB 985.

We encourage you to SUPPORT HB107, HB199, HB309, HB985

[HB107 \(Sullivan\) Rural Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program and Fund](#)

This legislation would:

Create the Rural Charging Infrastructure Program and Fund, providing developers with grants covering up to 70% of the costs associated with the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in rural, low-income localities.

Reasons to **SUPPORT** HB107

- **Supports communities otherwise left behind:** The \$106 million in federal funding for EV chargers is designated for major travel corridors. Virginia does not currently have funds set aside for EV charging stations in rural areas that are not along highways.
- **Promotes tourism:** EV charging stations near tourist destinations in low-income rural localities will ensure that people continue to visit the region as EVs become more prevalent, maintaining an essential contributor to the tax base and associated essential services, and supporting local businesses.
- **Unlocks fuel/maintenance cost-savings for rural residents:** With many EVs now achieving price parity with traditional gas-combustion vehicles, this bill will allow rural residents to reap cost savings associated with utilizing electricity, which is cheaper per mile than gas, as a fuel source.

[HB199 \(Krizek\) Virginia Brownfield and Coal Mine Renewable Energy Grant Fund and Program; allocation of funds.](#)

This legislation would:

Removes the provision in Virginia's Brownfield program that only permits federal funds to fund the program. Virginia's Brownfield program provides a \$500/kWh incentive for solar projects on former coal mines and a \$100/kWh incentive for solar projects on brownfields

Reasons to **SUPPORT HB199:**

- This simple fix will allow the Commonwealth to appropriate funds to this program.
- These modest incentives will help offset the slightly higher cost of projects in these locations.
- The more projects that are sited on former coal mines and brownfields means less impacts to important natural resources like farms and forests.

[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 HB309:**

- 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.

[HB985 \(Tran\) High polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon; prohibits pavement sealants that contain, civil penalty.](#)

This legislation would:

Prohibit the use of toxic high-PAH pavement sealants.

Reasons to **SUPPORT HB985:**

- The Chesapeake Bay Program has prioritized polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) as the second most important toxic contaminant.

- PAHs are a class of chemicals that are the byproduct left over from burning coal, oil, gas, or wood. They are cancer-causing chemicals, and human exposure can come through breathing in, ingesting or absorbing through the skin.
- Pavement sealants with high PAH levels degrade, ultimately releasing dust and fine particles laden with carcinogens into homes, waterways, the soil, and the air.
- Stormwater runoff from PAH coatings continue to be highly toxic to fish and aquatic organisms months after their application.
- Low PAH sealants are cost-competitive and in regular use throughout the country. Most highway departments and road agencies, such as VDOT, have not used high-PAH products on asphalt pavement for many years
- A case study, in the City of Austin, Texas demonstrated that a prohibition on the use of high PAH sealants resulted in significant decreases in PAH contamination to nearby streams and waterways.

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