

# SUPPORT HB636

Topic: Virginia student environmental literacy; plan; grant fund and program.  
Bill Patron: Delegate Carr

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## Reasons to support HB636:

- 1) Environmental education combines many disciplines and builds teamwork as well as high-level thinking and problem solving skills.
- 2) Legislators can support local school districts and advance Virginia's STEM efforts, with the goal of creating a workforce ready to be successful in the high paying and in-demand jobs of the future.
- 3) Learning how humans impact the environment positively and negatively and recognizing the value of Virginia's extraordinary natural resources is an essential part of our state education standards.
- 4) Many school districts are not connected to the curriculum resources, professional development, or local programs needed to offer these types of learning opportunities to all students. Additional statewide coordination will organize and distribute existing resources to all Virginia students and local districts as well as link new initiatives that would benefit from environmental education.

## Overview:

HB636 requires the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Science Museum of Virginia, and other stakeholders, to establish and update at least once every five years a Virginia student environmental literacy plan. The environmental literacy plan will prepare students to understand the major environmental challenges facing the Commonwealth and the United States; provide field experiences; and create opportunities for the enhanced and ongoing professional development of teachers. The bill requires the plan to include a description of how the Board will measure the environmental literacy of students, programs for the professional development of teachers, and how the Board will implement the plan, including securing funding and other necessary support. The bill establishes the Virginia Student Environmental Literacy Plan Grant Fund and Program, to award competitive grants to any local school board that seeks assistance to initiate, expand, or improve teacher professional development opportunities or student environmental education programs that align with the content and objectives of the plan.



### Friends of the Rappahannock

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This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit [www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker](http://www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker). VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.