



Key Bills for Planners
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The bills and resolutions listed here are those tracked by the Chapter and enacted.

Energy and Environment

Energy Efficiency

[HB 106/SB 253](#) Shared solar programs; amends existing program provisions to apply to Dominion Energy Virginia.

Amends existing shared solar program provisions applicable to Dominion Energy Virginia. The bill provides that a customer's net bill for participation in the shared solar program means the resulting amount a customer must pay the utility after the bill credit, defined in relevant law, is deducted from the customer's monthly gross utility bill. The bill divides the shared solar program into two parts, the first of which has an aggregate capacity of 200 megawatts. The bill provides that upon a determination that at least 90 percent of the megawatts of the aggregate capacity of part one of such program has been subscribed, as defined in the bill, and that project construction is substantially complete, the State Corporation Commission shall approve up to an additional 150 megawatts of capacity as part two of such program, 75 megawatts of which shall serve no more than 51 percent low-income customers, as defined in relevant law. The bill directs the Commission to initiate a proceeding to recalculate the minimum bill within 30 days of a final order in a proceeding establishing the value of a solar renewable energy certificate as required by relevant law. The bill specifies that the Commission shall update its shared solar program consistent with the requirements of the bill by March 1, 2025, and shall require each utility to file any associated tariffs, agreements, or forms necessary for implementing the program by December 1, 2025. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Energy to convene a stakeholder work group to determine the amounts and forms of certain project incentives and to submit a written report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor no later than November 30, 2024.

[HB 108/SB 255](#) Shared solar programs; SCC to establish by regulation, etc.

Requires the State Corporation Commission to establish by regulation a shared solar program, as defined in the bill, through which customers of American Electric Power may purchase electric power through a subscription in a shared solar facility, as defined in the bill. The bill requires the Commission to establish a minimum bill, which shall include the costs of all utility infrastructure and services used to provide electric service and administrative costs of the shared solar program, taking into account certain considerations. The bill directs the Commission to initiate a proceeding to recalculate such minimum bill within 30 days of its final order in a proceeding establishing the value of a solar renewable energy certificate as required by relevant law. The bill specifies that the Commission shall establish the shared solar program consistent with the requirements of the bill by January 1, 2025, and shall require each utility to file any associated tariffs, agreements, or forms necessary for implementing the program by July 1, 2025. Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Energy to convene a stakeholder work group to determine the amounts and forms of certain project incentives and to submit a

written report to the Chairs of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor no later than November 30, 2024.

HB 151/SB 245 Energy, Department of; building standards for certain local buildings.

Requires the Department of Energy, upon request, to provide technical assistance to localities, subject to available budgetary resources, as localities implement mandates related to onsite renewable energy generation, energy storage, and resilience standards for construction or renovation of certain public buildings. The bill also makes several technical and clarifying changes to the existing statute, in part by defining or redefining existing terms found in the statute.

HB 746/SB 565 Energy efficiency programs; definitions, incremental annual savings.

Provides that for the 2029 program year and all subsequent years, "in the public interest" for the purpose of assessing energy efficiency programs means that the State Corporation Commission determines that the program is cost-effective. The bill directs the Commission to promulgate regulations no later than September 30, 2025, establishing a single, consistent cost-effectiveness test for use in evaluating proposed energy efficiency programs. The bill requires Dominion Energy Virginia and Appalachian Power Company to track, quantify, and report to the Commission the incremental annual savings, as defined in the bill, achieved by such utility's energy efficiency programs.

HB 862 Electric utilities; integrated resource plans, grid-enhancing technologies and advanced conductors.

Requires an electric utility to include in an integrated resource plan (i) a comprehensive assessment of the potential application of grid-enhancing technologies and advanced conductors, as those terms are defined in the bill, in a manner that ensures grid reliability and safeguards the cybersecurity and physical security of the electric distribution grid and (ii) if applicable, a detailed explanation of why such technologies or conductors are not included in such plan.

HB 1062/SB 271 Net energy metering; eligible customer-generators and agricultural customer-generators.

Provides that no contract, lease, or arrangement by which a third party owns, maintains, or operates an electrical generating facility on an eligible customer-generator's property shall constitute the sale of electricity or cause the customer-generator or the third party to be considered an electric utility by virtue of participating in net energy metering. The bill prohibits an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator from being required to provide proof of liability insurance or to purchase additional liability insurance as a condition of interconnection. The bill exempts eligible customer-generators and eligible agricultural customer-generators that operate a battery storage device of capacity commensurate with and

equal to or greater than that of the electrical generating facility and in conjunction with the electrical generating facility from standby charges. The bill provides that any eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator may participate in demand response, energy efficiency, or peak reduction from dispatch of onsite battery service, provided that the compensation received is in exchange for a distinct service that is not already compensated by net metering credits for electricity exported to the electric distribution system or compensated by any other utility program or tariff.

HB 1491 Phase I Utility; recovery of development costs associated with small modular nuclear facility.

Permits American Electric Power, prior to the filing of an application for a certificate to construct a small modular nuclear facility, to request the State Corporation Commission to review such utility's decision to incur project development costs, as defined in the bill. The bill has an expiration date of July 1, 2034.

HJ 6 Energy Efficiency Day; designating as October 4, 2024, and each succeeding year thereafter.

Designates October 4, in 2024 and in each succeeding year, as Energy Efficiency Day in Virginia.

SB 454 Electric utilities; recovery of development costs associated with small modular reactor.

Permits Dominion Energy Virginia to petition the State Corporation Commission at any time for the approval of a rate adjustment clause for the recovery of small modular reactor project development costs for up to one small modular reactor facility. The bill also permits the utility to petition the Commission for project development cost recovery along separate development phases. The bill has an expiration date of December 31, 2029.

SB 495 RPS eligible sources; falling water generation facilities.

Provides that, notwithstanding contrary provisions of law, any falling water generation facility, as defined in the bill, located in the Commonwealth and commencing commercial operations prior to July 1, 2024, shall be considered a renewable energy portfolio standard eligible source.

SB 508 Renewable energy portfolio standard; geothermal heating and cooling systems.

Provides that geothermal heating and cooling systems, as defined in the bill, located in the Commonwealth are eligible for compliance with renewable energy portfolio standard requirements. The bill also requires the State Corporation Commission (the Commission) to convene a stakeholder work group to examine the feasibility of establishing renewable energy portfolio standard program (RPS program) requirements that require each Phase I and Phase II Utility to procure and retire renewable energy certificates (RECs) from geothermal heating and

cooling systems placed in service after August 16, 2022, as a percentage of the number of RECs used for RPS program compliance. The work group shall include representatives from the geothermal industry, Phase I and Phase II Utilities, the Department of Energy, environmental advocacy organizations, environmental justice organizations, consumer advocates, and other interested stakeholders. The Commission is required to report the findings and recommendations of the work group to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, the House Committee on Labor and Commerce, and the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation no later than December 1, 2024. Portions of the bill have a delayed effective date of January 1, 2025.

Environment and Water Resources

[HB 71/SB 372](#) Combined sewer overflow outfalls; compliance with regulations, Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Extends from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026, the date by which certain combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfalls that discharge into the Chesapeake Bay Watershed must be in compliance with Virginia law, the federal Clean Water Act, and the Presumption Approach described in the EPA CSO Control Policy, unless a higher level of control is necessary to comply with a total maximum daily load.

[HB 85](#) Mineral mining and processing; use of cyanide or a cyanide compound prohibited.

Prohibits any miner or other person from using cyanide or a cyanide compound in any mineral mining or processing operation.

[HB 122/SB 580](#) Environmental Quality, Department of; judicial review, authorization of projects, hearing & appeal.

Allows any person aggrieved by the final decision of the Department of Environmental Quality regarding the authorization of a project and who has participated in a proceeding for a permit to construct or operate a small renewable energy project under procedures adopted by the Department to seek judicial review of such action in accordance with the Administrative Process Act in the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond within 30 days of such decision. The bill requires the court to hear and decide such action as soon as practicable after the date of filing.

[HB 199/SB 25](#) Virginia Brownfield and Coal Mine Renewable Energy Grant Fund and Program; allocation of funds.

Removes the prohibition on the allocation of funds to the Virginia Brownfield and Coal Mine Renewable Energy Grant Fund and Program unless federal funds are available in an amount that would cover the entire cost of such an allocation.

HB 220 Water facilities; staffing of licensed operators.

Requires sewage treatment works, classified waterworks, and classified water treatment facilities to employ a licensed operator. The bill establishes a protocol for responding to an unexpected vacancy of the licensed operator position. The bill also permits remote monitoring of the facility by the licensed operator upon a demonstration of sufficient technology for the remote operator to adequately monitor the waterworks or treatment facility and manage onsite operators.

HB 309/SB 461 Forestland and Urban Tree Canopy Conservation Plan; Department of Forestry shall establish.

Requires the Department of Forestry, in coordination with a Technical Advisory Committee composed of stakeholders, to develop a Forestland and Urban Tree Canopy Conservation Plan no later than November 1, 2026, and update such plan at least once every five years thereafter. The bill requires the Department to post and maintain on its website the most recent version of the Plan and to submit the Plan to the Governor and Chairmen of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources no later than November 30, 2026, and following any update to such plan.

HB 320 Pesticide control exemptions; herbicide applications by unpaid volunteers.

Exempts from the provisions of state pesticide laws and regulations any unpaid volunteer who uses any nonrestricted herbicide with the express authorization of a local political subdivision for the sole purpose of controlling invasive plants or noxious weeds on properties owned by such local political subdivision. The bill provides that such unpaid volunteer shall use such herbicide under the direct supervision of a certified commercial applicator and the local political subdivision shall provide instruction by a certified commercial applicator to the unpaid volunteer prior to application on (i) the risks associated with the herbicide utilized, (ii) the proper use of equipment used to apply the herbicide, (iii) the proper use of personal protective equipment, (iv) other information to prevent an unreasonable adverse effect on the environment, and (v) any other information relevant to the specific herbicide utilized.

HB 517 European honeybee; designating as the official state pollinator.

Designates the honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) as the official state pollinator. The bill contains a technical amendment.

HB 596/SB 464 Fisheries Innovation for Sustainable Harvest Fund; established.

Establishes the Fisheries Innovation for Sustainable Harvest Fund for the purposes of supporting and promoting the economic growth and development of Virginia's seafood economy. The Fund shall be administered by the Marine Resources Commission for the sole

purpose of supporting and promoting the economic growth and development of Virginia's seafood economy while enhancing the sustainability of Virginia's marine fisheries resources through the awarding of grants, revolving loans, or other financial tools. The bill provides that the Commercial Fishing Advisory Board shall advise the Commission on expenditures from the Fund.

HB 656/SB 365 Regulated land-disturbing activities; submission and approval of erosion and sediment control plan.

Prohibits a person from engaging in any land-disturbing activity until, where Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) permit coverage is required, the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Program (VESCP) authority has obtained evidence of such permit coverage from the Department of Environmental Quality's online reporting system prior to issuing its land-disturbance approval. Current law requires the VESCP authority to obtain such evidence of VPDES permit coverage prior to approving an erosion and sediment control plan.

HB 673 Resilient VA Revolving Fund; projects located in locality having low community resilience rating.

Provides that the Department of Conservation and Recreation shall give additional weight to projects located in low-income geographic areas and projects that incorporate nature-based solutions when distributing loans or grants from the Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund to particular local governments.

HB 870 Sewage sludge regulations; relief from administrative requirements, adverse and unusual weather.

Requires the State Water Control Board, with the assistance of the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Health, to adopt regulations that include procedures for addressing administrative, staging, signage, and additional on-site and alternative storage site requirements when routine and on-site storage facility capacity and holding times are anticipated to be exceeded for the purpose of protecting against the release of sewage sludge into state waters and to account for increased intensity, frequency, and duration of storm events. The bill directs the Department of Environmental Quality to form a regulatory advisory panel consisting of certain stakeholders for the purpose of assisting the Board in developing the regulations as required by the bill.

HB 1085/SB 243 PFAS Expert Advisory Committee; established, monitoring sources.

Requires, for every public water system, as defined in the bill, the Department of Health (VDH) to assist the Department of Environmental Quality (the Department) by transferring to the Department quarterly all validated monitoring results available to VDH that indicate PFAS maximum containment level, as defined in the bill, exceedances. In such circumstances, the bill provides that the Department is required to develop and implement a plan to prioritize and

conduct PFAS assessments for identifying significant sources of PFAS in such public water system's raw water source or sources. The bill requires any facility, if deemed by the Department to be a potentially significant source of PFAS in the public water system's raw water source, (i) to perform and promptly report the results of quarterly discharge monitoring for one year and (ii) to report to the Department, within 90 days after being directed by the Department, its manufacture or use of PFAS. The bill establishes a PFAS Expert Advisory Committee to assist the Department and VDH in its PFAS-related efforts and requires the Committee to meet at least two times per year through June 30, 2027. The bill requires the Department to annually report certain information to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 1.

HB 1135/SB 402 Blue catfish; DACS, et al., to review efforts to create a market.

Requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to convene a work group of relevant stakeholders in order to support and encourage coordination regarding efforts to create a robust and resilient market for blue catfish. The work group shall (i) review past and ongoing efforts to promote the creation of a market for blue catfish, (ii) identify and explore potential sectors for the blue catfish market, and (iii) identify any actions that the Commonwealth can take to promote and expand the market for blue catfish. The Department shall submit a report of the findings and recommendations of the work group to the Governor, the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, and relevant committees of the General Assembly no later than September 1, 2025.

HB 1157 Federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth; agencies to consult on permits and reviews.

Requires the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Historic Resources, and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to establish policies and procedures for consulting with federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth when evaluating certain permits and reviews relating to environmental, cultural, or historic resources that potentially impact those federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth. The bill directs the Secretary of the Commonwealth to designate an Ombudsman for Tribal Consultation to facilitate communication and consultation with federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth and requires the Ombudsman to develop by January 1, 2025, a list of localities in which federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth shall be consulted to effectuate the provisions of the bill. The bill codifies Executive Order 82 (2021).

HB 1379 Environmental Quality, Department of; consolidation of annual report.

Consolidates varying due dates for certain reports relating to the Department of Environmental Quality to the Governor and the General Assembly to October 1 and requires such reports be submitted as part of one annual report. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2025.

HB 1431 Alternative onsite sewage systems; approval of treatment units.

Requires the Department of Health to approve treatment units for alternative onsite sewage systems if they meet certain NSF/ANSI standards or certain testing requirements.

HB 1458 Chief Resilience Officer of the Commonwealth; moves position under the Governor, etc.

Amends certain provisions relating to the functions and duties of the Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) of the Commonwealth. The bill requires the CRO to convene an Interagency Resilience Management Team to support the coordination of planning and implementation of resilience efforts, eliminates the position of Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection, and requires the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation to convene an Advisory Review Committee to assist in the distribution of loans and grants from the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund. The bill also requires the Director to convene an Advisory Review Committee to assist in the distribution of loans and grants from the Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund and adds the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources and the CRO to the list of those with whom the Virginia Resources Authority is required to consult in directing the distribution of loans or grants from such Fund. The bill requires, for the two Funds, the Department of Conservation and Recreation to (i) make available for public inspection at the office of the Department and on a publicly accessible website records of each application for grants and loans and the actions taken thereon and (ii) provide an opportunity for a 30-day public comment period prior to each new grant or loan offering to solicit feedback on proposed revisions to the Funds' manuals. **The provisions of subsection C of § 10.1-659 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, shall expire on February 1, 2025; The provisions of subsection D of § 10.1-659 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, shall become effective on February 1, 2025; the Chief Resilience Officer of the Commonwealth shall submit a report on funding and staffing needs to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations no later than December 31, 2025.**

SB 337 Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area; continued withdrawal permit for residential well.

Directs the State Water Control Board to waive the expiration of any ground water withdrawal permit for a well that serves exclusively residential users, is located in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area north of the Occoquan River, and is located within five miles of any commercial or industrial permitted ground water withdrawal. The bill provides that such waiver shall continue in force until the commercial or industrial permitted ground water withdrawals have been halted for five years. The Department of Environmental Quality shall then assess whether the termination of the commercial or industrial permitted ground water withdrawals has substantially mitigated the stress upon the aquifer and redetermine whether the permit for the residential well shall be renewed.

SB 342 Virginia Waste Management Board; open burning of solid wastes, transportation of vegetative waste.

Requires the Virginia Waste Management Board to amend regulations to allow for vegetative waste to be transported to another location for open burning if it is impractical or unsafe to destroy such waste on the premises of private property.

SB 581 Environmental Quality, Department of; groundwater and surface water withdrawal permits.

Authorizes the Department of Environmental Quality to utilize and incorporate comprehensive groundwater, surface water, and aquifer data in its decision-making processes related to the issuance and renewal of groundwater withdrawal permits and surface water withdrawal permits. Such data may include information relating to water levels, flow rates, and water quality.

SB 674 Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative; changes references relating to coastal resilience policy

Changes references relating to coastal resilience policy from the Coastal Policy Center at William and Mary School of Law to the Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative at The College of William and Mary in Virginia to reflect the dissolution of the Coastal Policy Center. The bill also adds the Collaborative to the list of entities with whom the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources may seek input and consultation in setting coastal resilience policies.

SJ 25 Groundwater supply in the Commonwealth; Department of Environmental Quality to study.

Requests that the Department of Environmental Quality complete a one-year study of the groundwater supply in the Commonwealth with technical assistance provided by the State Water Control Board. The Department shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2024, and submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

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Housing and Building Codes

Building Codes

[HB 151/SB 245](#) Energy, Department of; building standards for certain local buildings.

Requires the Department of Energy, upon request, to provide technical assistance to localities, subject to available budgetary resources, as localities implement mandates related to onsite renewable energy generation, energy storage, and resilience standards for construction or renovation of certain public buildings. The bill also makes several technical and clarifying changes to the existing statute, in part by defining or redefining existing terms found in the statute.

[HB 285](#) Uniform Statewide Building Code; construction of bus shelters.

Delegates enforcement of the Uniform Statewide Building Code to the local building official for bus shelters that do not exceed 256 square feet that are to be constructed for transit agencies receiving state money. The bill exempts the state from liability for any such bus shelter constructed on state-owned property. The bill has an expiration date of July 1, 2025.

[HB 368/SB 195](#) Uniform Statewide Building Code; Board of HCD to convene advisory group to evaluate.

Directs the Board of Housing and Community Development (the Board) to convene a stakeholder advisory group including fire code officials to evaluate and recommend revisions to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to permit Group R-2 occupancies to be served by a single exit, provided that the building has not more than six stories above grade plane. The bill requires the stakeholder advisory group to submit its findings and recommendations to the Board and to the Chairmen of the House Committee on General Laws and the Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology no later than December 1, 2024.

[HB 578/SB 538](#) Uniform Statewide Building Code; violations, increases fines.

Increases from \$2,500 to \$5,000 the minimum amount and from \$5,000 to \$10,000 the maximum amount that any person, firm, or corporation shall be fined when convicted of a third or subsequent offense of violating the provisions of the Uniform Statewide Building Code committed within 10 years of another such offense after having been at least twice previously convicted of such an offense. The bill also adds penalties for similar violations committed by owners of a blighted multifamily property.

HB 1425 Virginia Passenger Rail Authority; exempts railway tunnels and bridges from Building Code.

Exempts railway tunnels and bridges owned by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority from the Uniform Statewide Building Code and the Statewide Fire Prevention Code Act. The bill requires the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority to report annually to the State Fire Marshal on the maintenance and operability of installed fire protection and detection systems in its railway tunnels and bridges.

HB 1486/SB 48 Vacant buildings; registration.

Permits any county, city, or town to require, by ordinance, the owner of any building that has been vacant for at least 12 months and (i) that meets the definition of "derelict building" in relevant law, (ii) that meets the definition of "criminal blight" in relevant law, or (iii) in which a locality has determined a person is living without the authority of the owner to register such building annually. Under current law, any city and certain towns are permitted to require the owner of any building that has been vacant for at least 12 months and meets the definition of "derelict building" in relevant law to register such building annually. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Housing Commission.

Housing

HB 477/SB 50 Eviction Diversion Pilot Program; extends expiration of Program to July 1, 2025.

Extends the expiration of the Eviction Diversion Pilot Program to July 1, 2025. Currently, the Program is set to expire on July 1, 2024. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Housing Commission.

HB 478/SB 49 Community revitalization fund; expanding use for all localities.

Expands the current provisions of law allowing for the establishment of a community revitalization fund for the purpose of preventing neighborhood deterioration to apply to all localities. Currently, only the City of Richmond is authorized to establish such a fund. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Housing Commission.

HB 572/SB 232 Manufactured home parks; resident rights.

Provides that a rental agreement with a term of one year or more will not be automatically renewed if the tenant notifies the landlord in writing 60 days prior to the expiration date of such tenant's intent to not renew the agreement. The bill permits a tenant to not renew a rental agreement due to a change in terms of the agreement by the landlord if such tenant notifies the landlord of his intent to not renew the rental agreement within 30 days of receiving

the notice of the change in terms. The bill allows a landlord to include in a written rental agreement a late fee, not to exceed 10 percent of the amount of the rent due and owed, for unpaid rental payments. The bill removes the right of a tenant or landlord to terminate a rental agreement with a term of 60 days or more by written notice at least 60 days prior to the termination date of the agreement.

HB 701 Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act; routine maintenance, notice to tenant.

Requires landlords to include in the tenant's notice of routine maintenance the last date on which such maintenance may possibly be performed. The bill also requires landlords to perform routine maintenance within 14 days of delivering such notice to the tenant.

HB 1397 Manufactured Home Lot Rental Act; manufactured home park, notice of sale and relocation expenses.

Requires a manufactured home park owner to provide notice to the Department of Housing and Community Development and each manufactured home park tenant 90 days prior to unconditionally accepting an offer to purchase a manufactured home park. The bill grants a right of first refusal for localities located in Planning District 8. The bill provides for \$5,000 in relocation expenses for a manufactured homeowner if a rental agreement is terminated due to the sale of the manufactured home park to a buyer that is going to redevelop the park and change its use.

HB 960/SB 556 Historic rehabilitation; maximum amount of tax credit.

Increases from \$5 million to \$7.5 million, beginning in taxable year 2025, the maximum amount of the historic rehabilitation tax credit, including amounts carried over from prior taxable years, that may be claimed by a taxpayer in any taxable year.

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Administration of Local Government

Elections and Redistricting

HB 55/SB 131 Primary elections; candidates for nomination, withdrawal of candidacy.

Provides that if a person who is a candidate for nomination by a political party at a primary election and who appears on the ballot for such election withdraws his candidacy on or after the forty-fourth day before but prior to the Tuesday immediately preceding the primary election, and the result of such withdrawal is one remaining candidate who is now unopposed, the remaining candidate will be declared the party's nominee for the office sought and the primary election will be canceled. The bill requires the notice of withdrawal to be signed and notarized and to be submitted to the general registrar, who then transmits it to the local electoral board and the State Board of Elections along with a certification that the remaining candidate is now unopposed for nomination. The State Board is required to declare the remaining candidate to be the nominee within one calendar day of receiving such notice, and the local electoral board is then required to petition the circuit court for the cancellation of the primary election. Finally, the bill directs the State Board to prescribe procedures for canceling a primary election, including instructions for locking and securing voting systems, disposition of marked and unmarked absentee ballots, and voter notification. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2025.

HB 90/SB 109 Candidates; declaration of candidacy for primary.

Provides that the declaration of candidacy include a statement that if the signer's name appears on the primary ballot and he is not nominated then his name is not to be printed on the ballots for that office in the succeeding general election.

HB 111 President and Vice President; binding of electors, filling vacancies.

Provides that an elector who is selected by the state convention of any political party and who, at the convening of the electors after the election, refuses to present a ballot, presents an unmarked ballot, or presents a ballot marked in violation of his oath stating that he would, if elected, cast his ballot for the candidates for President and Vice President nominated by the party that selected the elector, or as the party may direct in the event of the death, withdrawal, or disqualification of the party nominee, is deemed to vacate the office of elector. The bill provides that the other electors present shall immediately fill such vacancy in the same manner as a vacancy due to an elector's death or failure or inability to attend. The bill applies the same provisions to electors who are named in a petition of qualified voters not constituting a political party. The bill contains technical amendments that consolidate into a single chapter the provisions of Title 24.2 relating to presidential electors.

HB 128 Door-to-door vendors; local regulation, political parties exempted.

Provides that local ordinances regulating the activities of door-to-door vendors shall not apply to any person participating in certain specified political activities.

HB 441/SB 605 Polling place; assistance for certain voters, clarifies definition of "person with a disability."

Amends the definition of "person with a disability" for purposes of the Elections title to mean any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his major life activities or who has a record of such impairment. The bill provides that any qualified voter who is a person with a disability shall be eligible for assistance outside of the polling place and makes technical amendments for consistency. The bill requires the training required for all officers of election to include specific training on voting outside of a polling place and directs the Department of Elections to incorporate into guidance documents for election officials the processes and procedures for voting outside of the polling place, including best practices for providing assistance for voters with disabilities.

HB 730/SB 692 Campaign finance; independent expenditure reports, electronic filing required.

Requires independent expenditure reports to be filed electronically. Current law allows such reports to be filed either electronically or in writing. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025.

HB 989 Elections administration; duties of Dept. of Elections, required election and voter participation.

Requires the Department of Elections to provide information for voters on its website, including (i) the role of and contact information for the State Board of Elections, the Department of Elections, local electoral boards, and general registrars and (ii) information about absentee voting, polling hours, Virginia's voter identification requirements and acceptable forms of identification, the casting of ballots, and a means for voters to find their polling place. The bill requires such website to allow a voter to review his current voter registration information and voting history. The bill also requires that the Department provide a version of its website in which all parts are translated into any language that is spoken by a language minority group, including that any page linked to a translated page also be translated.

SB 165 Candidates for office; petition of qualified voters, start date.

Clarifies the date from which valid signatures for petitions of qualified voters can be collected for persons seeking to become candidates in certain elections.

SB 364 Elections; protection of election officials, penalty.

Adds to the list of protected voters any current or former elector for President and Vice President of the United States and any person who is or has been a member of the State Board of Elections, the Commissioner of Elections, an employee of the Department of Elections, a member of a local electoral board, a general registrar, a deputy registrar, an employee in the office of the general registrar, or an officer of election. Protected voters are permitted by law to provide on the application for voter registration, in addition to the voter's residence street address, a post office box address located within the Commonwealth, which would be the address included on (i) lists of registered voters and persons who voted, (ii) voter registration records made available for public inspection, and (iii) lists of absentee voter applicants.

The bill makes it a Class 5 felony to, by bribery, intimidation, threats, coercion, or other means in violation of election laws, willfully and intentionally hinder or prevent an election official or employee of an election official from administering elections. Under current law, it is only a Class 5 felony to hinder or prevent an officer of election at a location being used for voting from holding an election. The bill also makes it a Class 5 felony to commit such acts against an elector for President and Vice President of the United States.

The bill creates a civil action for any election official, employee of an election official, or elector who is intimidated, threatened, or coerced by another person who thereby willfully and intentionally hinders or prevents, or attempts to hinder or prevent, such official, employee, or elector from fulfilling his duty.

FOIA

HB 816/SB 244 FOIA; meetings held through electronic communication during declared states of emergency.

Provides that the provisions for conducting a meeting by electronic means due to a state of emergency stated in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are declarative of existing law since March 20, 2020, with respect to the Governor's declared state of emergency due to COVID-19. Under the bill, any meeting by a public body using electronic communication means occurring from that date until July 1, 2021, and any otherwise lawful action taken at it is validated with respect to FOIA if the body provided public notice, public access, and public comment commensurate with the requirements of existing FOIA provisions regarding electronic and closed meetings. The bill is a response to the case *Berry v. Bd. of Supervisors* (Va. 2023) and is a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

HB 818/SB 36 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; amends definition of meeting, provisions of Act.

Exempts certain public meetings from the definition of "meeting" under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to clarify that three or more members of a public body may appear and participate in such public meeting without violating the Act, provided that no public business is transacted or discussed. The bill also exempts members of a public body who attend a public meeting of a second public body without violating the Act, provided that no public business is transacted or discussed. Finally, the bill defines "public business" as activity that a public body has undertaken or proposed to undertake on behalf of the people it represents. The bill states that its provisions are declarative of existing law.

HB 894/SB 734 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; electronic meetings.

Amends the number of all-virtual public meetings that public bodies, with certain exceptions, may convene in a calendar year to no more than two times per calendar year or 50 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. Current law limits the number of all-virtual public meetings to no more than two times per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. The bill also provides that with respect to all-virtual public meetings, when audio-visual technology is available, a member of a public body shall, for purposes of a quorum, be considered absent from any portion of the meeting during which visual communication with the member is voluntarily disconnected or otherwise fails or during which audio communication involuntarily fails.

HB 1040/SB 85 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; definition of "caregiver," remote participation in meetings.

Provides that for purposes of determining whether a quorum is physically assembled, an individual member of a public body who is a person with a disability or a caregiver, defined in the bill, and uses remote participation counts toward the quorum as if the individual was physically present. The bill also provides that the participation policy adopted by a public body, as required by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, shall not prohibit or restrict any individual member of a public body who is participating in an all-virtual meeting or who is using remote participation from voting on matters before the public body. As introduced, the bill was a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

HB 1412 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; exemption for complainant personal contact information.

Amends an existing exemption from mandatory disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act for names, addresses, and phone numbers of complainants furnished in confidence with respect to an investigation of individual zoning enforcement complaints or complaints relating to the Uniform Statewide Building Code or the Statewide Fire Prevention

Code made to a local governing body to exempt personal contact information of such complainants as defined in the bill.

SB 204 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; release of criminal investigative files exception.

Exempts a victim's insurance company and attorney from the prohibition on releasing photographic, audio, video, or other records depicting such victim. The bill also permits a victim, a victim's immediate family members if the victim is deceased, a victim's parent or guardian, the victim's insurance company, or the victim's attorney to waive the 14-day period for a public body to respond to a request for criminal investigative files.

SB 215 FOIA; removal of Virginia residency requirement for access to certain criminal investigation files.

Removes the requirement that persons to whom non-ongoing criminal investigation files shall otherwise be disclosed be citizens of the Commonwealth. Current law limits disclosure of public records to individuals who are citizens of the Commonwealth unless a clear exception applies.

SB 324 Virginia Freedom of Information Act; charges for production of public records.

Prohibits a public body from charging a requester for any costs incurred during the first hour spent accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for records requested in conjunction with the requester's first request. The bill provides that for any additional time spent accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for such records, or for any additional record requests, the public body shall not charge an hourly rate for accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for the records exceeding the lesser of the hourly rate of pay of the lowest-paid individual capable of fulfilling the request or \$40 per hour. The bill allows a public body to petition the appropriate court for relief from the \$40-per-hour fee cap upon showing by a preponderance of the evidence that there is no qualified individual capable of fulfilling the request for \$40 per hour or less and requires such petition to be heard within seven days of when the petition is made, provided that the public body has sent and the requester has received a copy of the petition at least three working days prior to filing. The bill also provides that in certain instances a hearing on any petition shall be given precedence on a circuit court's docket over all cases that are not otherwise given precedence by law and that the time period the public body has to respond to a record request shall be tolled between the requester's receipt of the petition and the final disposition of the court. The bill prohibits a public body from charging a requester for any court costs or fees resulting from a petition. The bill directs the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council to study whether public bodies should charge requesters pursuant to the bill and report on its findings by December 2024. The provisions of the bill amending the Code of Virginia do not become effective unless reenacted by the 2025 Session of the General Assembly.

Local Authority

[HB 62/SB 93](#) Local animal cruelty registries; any locality may establish, etc., a computerized registry.

Allows any locality to establish an animal cruelty registry for public access on the website of such locality or its local police department. The bill provides that such registry may include the names and relevant information of persons convicted of certain felony offenses for animal cruelty and that a person on such registry may request removal of his name after 15 years, provided that he has no additional felony convictions of an animal cruelty offense. The bill directs that all costs relating to a locality's animal cruelty registry shall be borne by such locality.

[HB 69](#) Vacancies in elected local offices; interim appointments, notice requirement.

Requires the local governing body or elected school board making an interim appointment to fill a vacancy in the membership of such body or board to hold a public meeting at least seven days prior to making such appointment. The bill specifies that at such meeting, the body or board shall announce the names of all persons being proposed for the interim appointment and shall make available for inspection each person's resume and any other materials required by the body or board.

[HB 233/SB 135](#) Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority; eligible site for site development grant.

Provides that the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority may determine a site of at least 50 contiguous acres to be an eligible site if such site meets certain criteria provided in the bill to receive a site development grant from the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Fund.

[HB 234/SB 516](#) All-terrain vehicles and off-road motorcycles; seizure, impounding, and disposition.

Authorizes the governing body of any city to provide by ordinance for the lawful seizure, impounding, and disposition of an illegally operated all-terrain vehicle or off-road motorcycle operated on a highway or sidewalk within such city. This bill is identical to SB 516.

[HB 242/SB 242](#) Virginia Public Procurement Act; competitive negotiation, exceptions to contractual terms.

Removes the prohibition on a public body from requiring an offeror to state in a proposal any exception to any liability provisions contained in a Request for Proposal for information technology. The bill also requires an offeror to state any exception to any contractual terms or conditions in writing at the time of responding to such Request for Proposal, if so requested by the public body, which exception shall be considered during negotiations, but prohibits the

public body from basing the scoring or evaluation on such exceptions when selecting offerors for negotiations. Current law only prohibits a public body from requiring an offeror to state in a proposal any exception to the liability provisions of the Request for Proposal. As introduced, the bill was a recommendation of the Public Body Procurement Work Group.

HB 258 Nonjudicial sale of tax delinquent real properties; unimproved properties w/in urban redevelopment.

Allows the nonjudicial sale of tax delinquent property when such property is (i) unimproved, (ii) one-half acre or less in size, and (iii) located within a designated urban redevelopment or revitalization zone.

HB 264/SB 157 Legal notices and publications; online-only news publications, requirements.

Provides that, where any ordinance, resolution, notice, or advertisement is required by law to be published in a newspaper, such ordinance, resolution, notice, or advertisement instead may be published in an online-only news publication subject to certain requirements specified in the bill. The bill sets out a process by which an online-only news publication shall petition the circuit court of the appropriate jurisdiction to publish such ordinances, resolutions, notices, or advertisements and authorizes the court to grant such online-only news publication the authority to publish such ordinances, resolutions, notices, or advertisements for a period of one year. The bill also describes the process by which an online-only news publication may continue renewing such authority to publish in each successive year.

HB 275 Public utilities; delay of termination of service for certain residential customers, report.

Requires the State Corporation Commission to conduct a proceeding to establish limitations on the authority of public utilities and cooperatives that provide electric, gas, water, or wastewater services to terminate service to any residential customer who provides certification that the customer has a serious medical condition or the customer resides with a family member with a serious medical condition. The bill directs the Commission to adopt regulations to implement such limitations after consulting with certain stakeholders. The bill requires the Commission to submit a report by November 1, 2026, and every three years thereafter, on the effectiveness of the serious medical condition policy after implementation of the regulations and include any suggested changes to such policy for residential utility and cooperative customers.

HB 311 Virginia Public Procurement Act; submissions of bids or proposals on electronic procurement system.

Mandates that all local public bodies provide an option to submit bids or proposals for procurement contracts through the Commonwealth's statewide electronic procurement system, known as eVA, or other electronic means. Current law only encourages local public

bodies to use eVA for such submissions. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2025.

HB 356/SB 510 Investment of public funds; qualified public entity allowed to invest in asset-backed securities.

Allows any qualified public entity of the Commonwealth to invest in asset-backed securities that are guaranteed by the United States or any agency thereof.

HB 525 Casino gaming; limits on required local referendums.

Provides that the governing body of any eligible host city that holds a local referendum on the question of whether casino gaming should be permitted in such city that subsequently fails shall be prohibited from holding another referendum on the same question for a period of three years from the date of the last referendum.

HB 755 Industrial and commercial areas; civil penalties for certain local property violations.

Allows localities by ordinance to charge enhanced civil penalties for certain local property violations on property that is zoned or utilized for industrial or commercial purposes.

HB 852 Local government ordinances related to fire departments; billing on behalf of volunteer fire depts.

Provides that the governing body of any county, city, or town in which a fire department or fire company is established may make such ordinances in relation to the powers and duties of such fire departments or fire companies as it deems proper, including billing on behalf of volunteer fire departments for the provision of emergency medical services.

HB 906/SB 480 Public utilities; municipal utilities, disconnection of service, consumer protections.

Suspends electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities subject to the regulation of the State Corporation Commission from disconnecting service to a residential customer for nonpayment of bills or fees during a state of emergency declared by the Governor and provides that such suspension lasts for 30 days after such declaration of the state of emergency. The bill suspends such electric and gas utilities from disconnecting service to a residential customer for nonpayment of bills or fees when the forecasted temperature low is at or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit and suspends electric utilities from disconnecting any such customer from service when the forecasted temperature high is at or above 92 degrees Fahrenheit within the 24 hours following the scheduled disconnection. The bill further suspends electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities from disconnecting residential customers from service on Fridays, weekends, state holidays, and the day immediately preceding a state holiday. The bill requires each such utility to notify its residential customers of such utility's disconnection for

nonpayment policy and to deliver notice of nonpayment of bills or fees to such customers prior to disconnection.

HB 914 Local historic district; locality that establishes district may provide tax incentive.

Allows a locality that establishes a local historic district to provide tax incentives for the conservation and renovation of historic structures in such district. The bill provides that such incentives may include tax rebates to the extent allowed by the Constitution of Virginia.

HB 1019 Health insurance; locality to allow local employees to participate in its group insurance programs.

Permits any locality to allow participation in its group health insurance program by any non-benefitted employee, including members of governing bodies, if such non-benefitted employee or governing body member is not otherwise entitled to participate, provided that such non-benefitted employees reimburse the locality for the full cost of their participation. The bill provides that reimbursement may include forgoing all or a part of a local government salary.

HB 1022/SB 207 Law-enforcement officers, certain; universal certification, necessary training.

Provides that any sworn law-enforcement officer with at least one year of experience (i) whose training qualifications meet or exceed current training standards established by the Board of Criminal Justice Services and who is in compliance with the minimum qualifications, (ii) who has not had a break in service of more than 24 months, and (iii) who is leaving the transferring agency in good standing with no pending investigations or disciplinary actions shall be eligible for employment at any law-enforcement agency within the Commonwealth or its political subdivisions. Prior to any conditional offer of employment, the bill requires the hiring law-enforcement agency to request certain specified information from all prior law-enforcement agencies and to employ all reasonable means to obtain personnel records for law-enforcement officers transferring from an out-of-state or federal law-enforcement agency. The bill requires that upon the receipt of all requested information by the hiring law-enforcement agency, the applicant law-enforcement officer shall complete a sworn declaration that the provided information or records are, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, a true, correct, and complete response to such request.

HB 1053 Abandoned watercraft; destruction and disposal by localities and state agencies.

Allows localities and state agencies to apply, under certain conditions, to the Department of Wildlife Resources for an authorization to destroy and dispose of an abandoned watercraft.

HB 1071 Speed limits; expands authority of any locality to reduce limit to less than 25 miles per hour.

Expands the current authority of any locality to reduce the speed limit to less than 25 miles per hour, but not less than 15 miles per hour, on highways within its boundaries that are located in a business district or residence district to include highways within the state highway system, provided that such reduced speed limit is indicated by lawfully placed signs. The bill authorizes a locality to restore a speed limit that has been reduced pursuant to this authority and requires the locality to notify the Commissioner of Highways of a change in speed limit.

HB 1108/SB 18 Virginia Public Procurement Act; construction management and design-build contracting.

Requires state public bodies, covered institutions, and local public bodies to provide documentation of the processes used for the final selection of a construction contract to all the unsuccessful applicants upon request. The bill adds certain requirements for covered institutions, including posting all documents that are open to public inspection exchanged between the Department of General Services and the covered institution on the central electronic procurement website eVA. The bill requires approval by a majority vote of the covered institution's board of visitors or governing board if the covered institution chooses to proceed with construction management or design-build against the recommendation of the Department for (i) projects funded by funds other than those provided from the state general fund or (ii) projects of \$65 million or more funded in whole or in part from state general funds. For projects under \$65 million funded in whole or in part by state general funds, the bill provides that the covered institution shall obtain approval from the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, or their designees, and a representative of the Department.

The bill requires a local public body to adopt a resolution or motion to use construction management or design-build, if required by its local governing body, prior to issuing a Request for Qualifications and to publish notice of such resolution or motion on its website or eVA. The bill provides that the Department shall report annually, for any construction management or design-build project, on the qualifications that made such project complex. Finally, the bill requires the Department, with the assistance of staff of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, to assess the implementation and administration of construction management and design-build projects and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by November 1, 2029.

HB 1113 Virginia Public Procurement Act; job order contracting, limitations.

Increases from \$6 million to \$10 million the maximum threshold above which the sum of all jobs performed in a one-year job order contract term shall not exceed. The bill also increases the maximum threshold amount for any individual job order from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Finally, the bill increases from two to three the number of additional one-year terms for which

job order contracts may be renewable, and the bill only applies to contracts entered into on or after the bill's effective date.

HB 1116 Virginia Public Procurement Act; methods of procurement, certain construction projects.

Allows a public body to establish purchase procedures, if adopted in writing, not requiring competitive sealed bids or competitive negotiation for single or term contracts for non-transportation-related construction projects if the aggregate or the sum of all phases is not expected to exceed \$300,000. Current law places the limit at \$200,000.

HB 1361 Va. Public Procurement Act; preference for goods produced in Virginia, U.S., & Va. resident bidders.

Provides preference as it relates to procurement for a bidder who is a resident of Virginia and then a bidder whose goods are produced in the United States. For the procurement of goods by manufacturers, when the lowest responsive and responsible bidder is not a resident of Virginia and the bid of any Virginia resident is within 10 percent of such bid, the bill gives the lowest responsive and responsible bidder that is a Virginia resident the option to match the price of the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Furthermore, if the lowest responsive and responsible bidder is a resident of another state and such state allows a resident a percentage preference or price-matching preference for the procurement of goods, the bill grants a like preference to responsive and responsible bidders who are residents of Virginia. Under the bill, an eligible bidder that is a Virginia resident shall be granted the greater of either preference. The bill exempts a public body from the provisions of the bill if such public body is rendered ineligible to receive federal funding due to the provisions of the bill. The bill has an expiration date of July 1, 2027.

Finally, the bill directs the Department of General Services to report to the General Assembly regarding the bill's efficacy, including any retaliatory action taken by other states, no later than the first day of the 2025 Regular Session.

HB 1392 Local government; employee insurance programs.

Authorizes any locality to include in its group life, accident, and health insurance programs any person to whom coverage could be extended under the provision of current law that sets out who may be covered under a private group accident and sickness insurance policy.

HB 1415 Historic structures; civil penalty for demolition.

Authorizes any locality to adopt an ordinance establishing a civil penalty for the razing, demolition, or moving of a building or structure that is located in a historic district or that has been designated by a governing body as a historic structure or landmark in violation of an ordinance that no such building or structure shall be razed, demolished, or moved without the

approval of a review board. The bill provides that such civil penalty shall not exceed the market value of the property as determined by the assessed value of the property at the time of razing, demolition, or moving of the building or structure.

HB 1488/SB 413 Local government; standardization of public notice requirements for certain meetings, hearings, etc.

Standardizes the frequency with which and length of time in which notices of certain meetings, hearings, and other intended actions of localities must be published. The notice provisions included in the bill are organized into three groups: (i) publication required at least seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; (ii) publication required twice, with the first notice appearing no more than 28 days before and the second notice appearing no less than seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; and (iii) publication required three times, with the first notice appearing no more than 35 days before and the third notice appearing no less than seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action. The bill also standardizes descriptive information in such notices related to (a) proposing, amending, or repealing ordinances; (b) local budget adoption; and (c) zoning ordinances and planning-related actions.

SB 9 Orange County; authorization to establish department of real estate assessment, etc.

Authorizes Orange County to establish a department of real estate assessment and to enter into an agreement with a contiguous county or city to establish a joint department of real estate assessment. Under current law, real estate assessments are made by the commissioner of the revenue, except in Accomack, Goochland, James City, and Powhatan Counties, and among those, only James City and Powhatan Counties may enter into an agreement to establish a joint department of real estate assessment.

SB 260 Va. Public Procurement Act; preference for goods produced in Virginia, U.S., & Va. resident bidders.

Provides first preference for goods produced in Virginia and then provides for preference to goods produced in the United States before a tie bid is decided by lot in determining the award for any contract for goods, services, or construction under the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

SB 336 Photo speed monitoring devices; high-risk intersection segments.

Permits a state or local law-enforcement agency to place and operate a photo speed monitoring device at a high-risk intersection segment, defined in the bill, located within the locality for the purpose of recording violations resulting from the operation of a vehicle in excess of the speed limit, provided that such law-enforcement agency certifies that a traffic fatality has occurred since January 1, 2014, in such segment. The bill provides the same requirements for such devices, information collected from such devices, and any enforcement

actions resulting from information collected from such devices as current law applies to the use of such devices in school crossing zones and highway work zones.

SB 487 Artificial intelligence by public bodies; Joint Commission on Technology & Science to examine use.

Directs the Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS), in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to conduct an analysis of the use of artificial intelligence by public bodies in the Commonwealth and the creation of a Commission on Artificial Intelligence. JCOTS shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Chairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations and Communications, Technology and Innovation and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and General Laws and Technology no later than December 1, 2024.

Local Revenue

HB 25/SB 116 Retail Sales and Use Tax; establishes an annual tax holiday that takes place in August.

Establishes an annual retail sales and use tax holiday that takes place on the first full weekend in August beginning on July 1, 2025, through July 1, 2030. During such weekend, state retail sales and use tax will not apply to certain (i) school supplies, (ii) clothing and footwear, (iii) qualified products designated as Energy Star or WaterSense, (iv) portable generators, or (v) hurricane preparedness equipment.

HB 558/SB 4 Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for certain surviving spouses (voter referendum).

Provides for a referendum at the November 5, 2024, election to approve or reject an amendment to the Constitution of Virginia that would expand the real property tax exemption that is currently available to the surviving spouses of soldiers killed in action to be available to the surviving spouses of soldiers who died in the line of duty with a Line of Duty determination from the U.S. Department of Defense. House Joint Resolution 45 is the second reference legislation for this Constitutional Amendment. If a majority of those voting in the November 2024 election vote in favor of the amendment, it would become effective January 1, 2025.

HB 574 Recordation tax; value of interest conveyed.

Provides that for purposes of recordation taxes, the value of a property interest conveyed shall be the most recent property tax assessment for such property at the time the property is conveyed.

HB 639/SB 677 Real property tax; notice of rate and assessment changes.

Provides that in certain localities (any county, city, or town that conducts an annual or biennial reassessment of real estate or in which reassessment of real estate is conducted primarily by employees of the county, city, or town under direction of the commissioner of the revenue), in the event that the total assessed value of real property would result in an increase of one percent or more in the total real property tax levied, the notice of assessment changes shall state the tax rate that would levy the same amount of real estate tax as the previous year when multiplied by the new total assessed value of real estate.

HB 912 Correctional facilities, local; stores and telephone systems, fees.

Provides that the net profits from the operation of stores and telephonic communication systems in local correctional facilities shall be used within each facility respectively for educational, recreational, or medical purposes for the benefit of the inmates to include behavioral health, substance abuse, reentry, and rehabilitative services and may be expended to pay for the training, salaries, and benefits of employees or contractors whose primary job is to provide such programs and services to the inmates.

HB 944/SB 129 Forest Sustainability Fund; fund allocation.

Provides that moneys from the Forest Sustainability Fund must be allocated proportionally among localities that forgo tax revenues as a result of the use value assessment and taxation for real estate devoted for forest use. The bill specifies that no locality shall receive an allocation of more than four percent or less than one-half of one percent of available funds from the Fund.

HB 1211 Tax assessment districts; establishes, petition by parcel owners.

Changes the threshold for petitioning a city or town for establishment of a tax assessment district from not less than three-fourths of the landowners affected to the owners of not less than three-fourths of the parcels affected.

HB 1429/SB 483 Tangible personal property tax; exemption for indoor agriculture equipment and machinery.

Specifies that farm machinery, farm equipment, and farm implements used by an indoor, closed, controlled-environment commercial agricultural facility are a class of farm machinery and farm implements that a locality may exempt from personal property taxation.

HB 1502/SB 194 Tangible personal property tax; classification of certain vehicles, removes sunset date.

Removes the sunset on authorization for localities to assign a rate of tax or assessment different from the general tangible personal property rate on certain automobiles, trucks, motor vehicles for use by the handicapped, motorcycles, mopeds, all-terrain vehicles, off-road motorcycles, campers, and other recreational vehicles. Under current law, such authorization is limited to taxable years 2022 through 2024. **(That the provisions of this act shall apply to taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2022)**

HB 1538 Manufactured home; conversion to real property.

Establishes a process whereby a manufactured homeowner who is not listed as the owner of such manufactured home on its title may detitle such manufactured home in order to convert the home to real property.

SB 240 Property tax; exemption for surviving spouses of armed forces members who died in the line of duty.

Expands the real property tax exemption that is currently available to the surviving spouses of soldiers killed in action to the surviving spouses of soldiers who died in the line of duty with a Line of Duty determination from the U.S. Department of Defense. This bill is enabling legislation for a constitutional amendment to be presented during the November 2024 general election.

SJ 3 Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for certain surviving spouses.

Expands the current tax exemption for real property available to the surviving spouses of soldiers killed in action to the surviving spouses of soldiers who died in the line of duty with a Line of Duty determination from the U.S. Department of Defense.

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Planning and Land Use

Land Conservation

[HB 892/SB 616](#) **Farmland Preservation, Office of; transfers Office to Dept. of Forestry.**

Transfers from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to the Department of Forestry the Office of Farmland Preservation and its powers and duties and reporting requirements, the Virginia Farm Link Program, the Century Farm Program, and the Virginia Farmland and Forestland Preservation Fund. The bill renames the Office as the Office of Working Lands Preservation. The bill makes technical amendments to effectuate the transfer and requires the Department of Environmental Quality to report to the Department of Forestry by July 1 of each year certain enumerated information about nonpoint source nutrient credits certified in the previous year that involve land use conversion.

[HB 944/SB 129](#) **Forest Sustainability Fund; fund allocation.**

Provides that moneys from the Forest Sustainability Fund must be allocated proportionally among localities that forgo tax revenues as a result of the use value assessment and taxation for real estate devoted for forest use. The bill specifies that no locality shall receive an allocation of more than four percent or less than one-half of one percent of available funds from the Fund.

Land Use and Growth Management

[HB 281/SB 13](#) **Child day programs; use of office buildings, waiver of zoning requirements.**

Permits any locality to by ordinance provide for the waiver of any requirements for zoning permits for the operation of a child day program in an office building, as defined by the bill, provided that such facility satisfies the requirements for state licensure as a child day program.

[HB 459/SB 121](#) **Trees; conservation during land development process in certain localities.**

Expands authority of certain localities to adopt an ordinance providing for the planting and replacement of trees during the development process by allowing a tree canopy fund that currently applies to the planting of trees on public property to include maintenance of trees on public property and planting and maintenance of trees on private property. The bill removes a provision that requires that any funds collected for the purposes of the tree canopy fund be returned to the original contributor if not spent within five years but maintains the requirement that such funds be spent within five years. The bill also includes an expansion of the canopy credit.

HB 619/SB 343 Military centered community zones; localities may establish, by ordinance, one or more zones.

Allows localities to establish, by ordinance, one or more military centered community zones, defined in the bill as a community that has a significant presence of military personnel living or working in the designated area and where such presence drives, or has the potential to drive, significant economic activity. The bill provides that a locality, or another political subdivision acting on behalf of the locality, may offer unique benefits to businesses looking to locate within a zone for the purpose of serving the needs of the military personnel, including reduction of certain fees and taxes. In addition, the bill provides that local governing bodies are authorized to enter into agreements for the payment of economic development incentive grants to such businesses. The bill also allows a governing body to provide for certain regulatory flexibility and incentives and provides that the establishment of a military centered community zone shall not preclude the area from also being designated as an enterprise zone or from receiving support under the Virginia Military Community Infrastructure Grant Program.

HB 634/SB 308 Residential dwelling units; rentals for 30 consecutive days or longer.

Prohibits a locality from enacting or enforcing an ordinance that bans the rental of residential dwelling units for 30 consecutive days or longer. The bill allows a locality by ordinance to regulate such rental if such regulations (i) are reasonable and (ii) do not exceed the requirements for an owner-occupied residential property or a residential property rented for a lease term of 12 months or more in the same zoning district.

HB 650 Zoning; solar photovoltaic and energy storage projects.

Provides that the conditions of a special exception or special use permit may include a period of validity; however, in the case of a special exception or special use permit for residential and electrical generation projects, the period of validity shall be no fewer than three years. The bill provides that for so long as a special exception, special use permit, or conditional use permit remains valid, no change or amendment to any local ordinance, map, resolution, rule, regulation, policy, or plan adopted subsequent to the date of approval of the special exception, special use permit, or conditional use permit shall adversely affect the right of the developer or his successor in interest to commence and complete an approved development in accordance with the lawful terms of the special exception, special use permit, or conditional use permit unless the change or amendment is required to comply with state law or there has been a mistake, fraud, or a change in circumstances substantially affecting the public health, safety, or welfare.

HB 656/SB 365 Regulated land-disturbing activities; submission and approval of erosion and sediment control plan.

Prohibits a person from engaging in any land-disturbing activity until, where Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) permit coverage is required, the Virginia Erosion and

Sediment Control Program (VESCP) authority has obtained evidence of such permit coverage from the Department of Environmental Quality's online reporting system prior to issuing its land-disturbance approval. Current law requires the VESCP authority to obtain such evidence of VPDES permit coverage prior to approving an erosion and sediment control plan.

HB 947 Local government; regulation by ordinance for locations of tobacco products, etc.

Allows a locality to regulate the retail sale locations of tobacco products, nicotine vapor products, alternative nicotine products, or hemp products intended for smoking for any such retail sale location and may prohibit a retail sale location on property within 1,000 linear feet of a child day center or a public, private, or parochial school.

HB 1461 Short-term rental property; locality's ability to prohibit lessee or sublessee operator.

Prohibits a locality from barring an operator, as defined in existing law, from offering such property as a short-term rental solely on the basis that the operator is a lessee or sublessee of such property, provided that the property owner has granted permission for its use as a short-term rental. The bill adds an attestation that the property owner has granted such permission if the operator is a lessee or sublessee to the information that an operator must provide to annually register such short-term rental. The bill permits a locality to limit a lessee or sublessee to one short-term rental.

HB 1486/SB 48 Vacant buildings; registration.

Permits any county, city, or town to require, by ordinance, the owner of any building that has been vacant for at least 12 months and (i) that meets the definition of "derelict building" in relevant law, (ii) that meets the definition of "criminal blight" in relevant law, or (iii) in which a locality has determined a person is living without the authority of the owner to register such building annually. Under current law, any city and certain towns are permitted to require the owner of any building that has been vacant for at least 12 months and meets the definition of "derelict building" in relevant law to register such building annually. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Housing Commission.

HB 1488/SB 413 Local government; standardization of public notice requirements for certain meetings, hearings, etc.

Standardizes the frequency with which and length of time in which notices of certain meetings, hearings, and other intended actions of localities must be published. The notice provisions included in the bill are organized into three groups: (i) publication required at least seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; (ii) publication required twice, with the first notice appearing no more than 28 days before and the second notice appearing no less than seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action; and (iii) publication required three times, with the first notice appearing no more than 35 days before and the third notice appearing no less than seven days before the meeting, hearing, or intended action. The bill also

standardizes descriptive information in such notices related to (a) proposing, amending, or repealing ordinances; (b) local budget adoption; and (c) zoning ordinances and planning-related actions.

SB 296 Local planning commission; action on proposed plats, site plans, and development plans.

Requires local planning commissions to use the same approval process for residential development projects as is currently required for commercial development projects.

SB 339 Blockchain technology, digital asset mining, etc.; Jt. Commission on Technology & Science to study.

Directs the Joint Commission on Technology and Science to conduct an analysis of and make recommendations regarding the use of blockchain technology, digital asset mining, and cryptocurrency in the Commonwealth. The bill requires the Commission to submit its findings to the Chairmen of the House Committees on Appropriations and Communications, Technology and Innovation and the Senate Committees on Finance and Appropriations and General Laws and Technology no later than December 1, 2024.

SB 544 Short-term rental property; locality's ability to prohibit use of accessory dwelling unit.

Prohibits a locality from barring the use of or requiring that a special exception, special use, or conditional use permit be obtained for the use of a residential dwelling as a short-term rental where the dwelling unit is also legally occupied by the property owner as his primary residence.

SB 679 Enterprise zones; extension.

Provides that any enterprise zone in existence as of June 30, 2024, shall be extended for a period of four years in addition to any renewal periods currently authorized by law and authorizes the Governor, upon the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, to renew enterprise zones for up to four five-year renewal periods for zones designated on or after July 1, 2005, and for up to two five-year renewal periods for zones designated before July 1, 2005.

SB 701 Vested rights; building permits.

Provides that if a locality has issued a building permit, despite nonconformance with the zoning ordinance, and a property owner, relying in good faith on the issuance of the building permit, incurs extensive obligations or substantial expenses in diligent pursuit of a building project that is in conformance with the building permit and the Uniform Statewide Building Code, the locality shall not treat such building as an illegal use but rather as a legal nonconforming use. Current law requires that such project be completed and a certificate of occupancy issued in order to receive such protection.

Transportation

Funding – Roads

[HB 74/SB 644](#) Unpaved secondary highways; improvement of secondary hwy. includes improvements other than paving.

Clarifies that the improvement of non-surface treated secondary highways includes improvements other than paving, as described in the bill. The bill also clarifies that the local governing body of the county receiving funds for such improvements will select the highways or highway segments to be improved, after consulting with the Department of Transportation.

[HB 1254](#) Bridges; state of good repair, allocation of funds.

Designates bridges with a general condition rating, defined in the bill, of no more than five for at least one major bridge component as eligible for state of good repair funds. Currently, bridges must be structurally deficient to be eligible. The bill authorizes the use of state of good repair funds for improvements anticipated to extend the useful life of a bridge by at least 10 years. The bill applies to new project allocations made by the Commonwealth Transportation Board after June 1, 2025.

Funding – Transit

[SJ 28](#) Public transit systems, joint subcommittee to study funding needs.

Establishes a joint subcommittee to study long-term, sustainable, dedicated funding and cost-containment controls and strategies to ensure the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Virginia Railway Express, and the public transit systems that serve the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission transportation districts meet the growing needs of public transit in the region.

Policy

[HB 143](#) Utility work database; VDOT to establish and maintain a publicly accessible database.

Requires the Department of Transportation to establish and maintain a publicly accessible database and map of all utility work that has been approved by the Department and will occur within a highway right-of-way in a residential neighborhood. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2025.

HB 144 Speed limits; notification to primary liaison in each locality when change occurs.

Requires the Department of Transportation, if the Commissioner of Highways increases or decreases a speed limit, to notify the primary liaison with the Department in each locality within which such speed limit change will occur. The bill also requires the locality to notify the governing body of any property owners' association or condominium association if any such speed limit change will occur in a community subject to such association.

HB 201 Transportation entities, certain; membership.

Requires, rather than permits, the four members of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the two members of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission, and the two members of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority who are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates to be members of the House of Delegates.

HB 282 Highway work zones; creates a traffic infraction for any moving violation in a work zone.

Creates a traffic infraction for any moving violation in a highway work zone punishable by a fine of not less than \$300 for the first offense and not less than \$500 for any subsequent offense. The bill provides that for any subsequent offense that occurs within the same 12-month period as another such offense such fine shall be not less than \$750.

HB 425 Motor Vehicles, Department of; release of privileged information.

Permits the Department of Motor Vehicles to release to a party that is subject to an administrative proceeding conducted by the Department nonmedical privileged information necessary to participate in such administrative proceeding. The bill limits such information to matters of fact and law asserted or questioned by the Department and prohibits the dissemination of such information to any third party that is not a party to the administrative proceeding.

HB 1071 Speed limits; expands authority of any locality to reduce limit to less than 25 miles per hour.

Expands the current authority of any locality to reduce the speed limit to less than 25 miles per hour, but not less than 15 miles per hour, on highways within its boundaries that are located in a business district or residence district to include highways within the state highway system, provided that such reduced speed limit is indicated by lawfully placed signs. The bill authorizes a locality to restore a speed limit that has been reduced pursuant to this authority and requires the locality to notify the Commissioner of Highways of a change in speed limit.

HB 1109/SB 205 Toll invoices; mail.

Authorizes the use of a trackable correspondence equivalent to certified mail for sending invoices for unpaid tolls to a vehicle owner prior to the Department of Motor Vehicles placing a registration stop on such vehicle due to unpaid tolls. Current law requires such invoices to be mailed by certified mail.

HB 1425 Virginia Passenger Rail Authority; exempts railway tunnels and bridges from Building Code.

Exempts railway tunnels and bridges owned by the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority from the Uniform Statewide Building Code and the Statewide Fire Prevention Code Act. The bill requires the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority to report annually to the State Fire Marshal on the maintenance and operability of installed fire protection and detection systems in its railway tunnels and bridges.

SB 572 School buses; increases maximum width of vehicles.

Increases from 100 inches to 102 inches the maximum total outside width permitted for school buses.