



County of Gloucester
Board of Supervisors
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Gloucester County Legislative Agenda – 2024 General Assembly

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- 2. Implement Transient Occupancy Tax Collection in State Parks**
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Legislative Requests

1. Fund build-out of Machicomoco & Middle Peninsula State Park

Gloucester supports full funding for the development of Machicomoco State Park, to include construction of a boat landing, and the Middle Peninsula State Park to provide active and passive recreation opportunities, water access for motorboats, and river access for park visitors.

2. Implement Transient Occupancy Tax Collection in State Parks

Gloucester County supports legislation that would extend the application of local lodging taxes to state parks where camping/lodging activities occur. The tax is charged at private facilities and the minimal increase will not impact the use of state parks. A portion of the tax must be spent solely for tourism and travel, marketing of tourism initiatives or related activities. These funds will help localities, especially those with limited tourism budgets, to market tourist attractions including the State parks.

3. Exclude drinking water impoundments from definition of impervious land area

Gloucester County asks that the General Assembly review the DEQ - VRRM spreadsheet methodology to exclude monitored drinking water impoundments from the “wet pond” impervious land cover type. With the approval of COV Section 62.1-44.15:27.2 for water quantity tiered approach, rural coastal localities are unable to fully benefit from its implementation, as engineering design/construction costs for projects in many HUCs remain high due to the inclusion of such drinking water impoundments being classified as impervious.

4. Increase funding of Planning District Commissions

Gloucester County urges the General Assembly to Increase funding of Planning District Commissions by \$150,000 per PDC in both FY25 and FY26 (total funding request of \$3.15 million per fiscal year) to secure federal dollars, to push collaborative projects and to assist the State.

State funding for PDCs remains below the \$90,000 per year level (for most PDCs) provided in FY2006. State and federal agencies rely on PDCs to convene key players and to administer and broker key local and regional projects of importance to the State; this requires a core competency that has had stagnant funding the past 15 years. With an unprecedented amount of federal grant funding being available, additional resources for PDCs will help bring these dollars to the State and regions.

5. Recordation Tax Distribution to Localities

Gloucester County requests the restoration of state recordation tax revenues distributed to counties and cities for use of transportation or public education purposes.

Legislative Priority Positions

1. State Funding for Public Education

Gloucester County supports full state funding for public education, including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education and the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC). As long as these recommendations coincide with prevailing local practice, targeted incentive programs, capital, and maintenance support, and teacher salaries. Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to other core services.

Gloucester supports full restoration of budget cuts, including the elimination of the funding cap on support positions, and full reinstatement of the Cost of Competing Adjustment “COCA” for support staff.

Gloucester urges the General Assembly to approve and fund strategies addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth and funding for school construction costs.

2. Local Authority Granted to Counties

Gloucester County supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule by enhancing local authority and autonomy in matters including land use, revenue measures, procurement, and other issues of local concern. Gloucester County supports extending powers currently granted to some local governments to all local governments. Gloucester County opposes legislation that erodes local authority.

Specific concerns:

- Gloucester County opposes any legislation that limits or restricts local authority to regulate home-based businesses, including short-term rentals regardless of whether services or goods are purchased through an online hosting platform.
- Gloucester County supports responsiveness by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to localities’ individual needs rather than determination of needs by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Gloucester County supports the expansion of authority and discretion of Resident Administrators of VDOT to approve modifications to design standards where appropriate with local needs, including reduction of speed limits.

3. Funding for Broadband

Gloucester County supports 100 percent funding by the Commonwealth to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas, and streamline the application process for Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grants.

4. Actions to Optimize Paying off the Debt on the Coleman Bridge

Gloucester County recognizes the final payment on the original bond for widening the Coleman Bridge was made in June 2021 leaving only the toll operations and repayment of Toll Facility Revolving Fund (TFRF) to be paid for with toll proceeds. The County further acknowledges that with a balance of approximately \$33M owed, the latest estimate for paying off the TFRF is 2033.

As the Virginia Department of Transportation reviews the need to replace toll collection equipment, Gloucester County requests that a financial analysis be conducted to determine efficiencies and savings of operational costs with the new equipment. Further, Gloucester County maintains its standing request for a seat at the table when matters concerning the Coleman Bridge are contemplated, as Gloucester County residents pay the highest percentage of all toll revenues.

5. Transportation Funding

Gloucester County supports additional state funding to address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, including additional funding for the paving of unpaved roads. Gloucester County supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications.

Gloucester County also supports legislation and policy initiatives that would require VDOT to address ditches, outfalls, and flooding of roads, and plan ahead for sea level rise/land subsidence.

6. Use of Automated License Plate Reading Cameras within VDOT right of way

Gloucester County supports the use of VDOT right of way for placement of license plate reading cameras to help with crime investigation and crime reduction. Use of public right of way will allow for additional and strategic camera placement.

7. Flood Preparedness

Gloucester County supports continued funding and resources that assist localities in preventing and reducing the impacts of flooding. Gloucester County supports greater flexibility in these programs and funding sources that will maximize their benefits and best suit local and regional needs.

8. Continue Funding for the Removal of Abandoned Derelict and Sunken Boats

Gloucester County supports the continued state funding for the removal of derelict and sunken boats. Working with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) grant program is the most viable way the County has to respond to the problem.

9. Funding for the Victims Services Grant

Gloucester County supports fully funding the Victim Services Grant. Federal funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) was cut by 10% in FY24. DCJS (spell out) is planning on VOCA funding decreasing again in the next fiscal year. At the same time as the VOCA decrease, DCJS learned that the special fund decreased, and no funding will be available this fiscal year. Gloucester supports fully funding the Victim Services Grant to provide needed services to victims of crime.

10. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Gloucester supports expansion of state and federal funding to provide for the availability and installation of interoperable, electric vehicle charging stations in collaboration with localities to US Highways.

11. Funding for Dredging

The County opposes the US Coast Guard's abandonment of channels and removal of Aids to Navigation and supports continued funding of dredging projects that maintain the economic viability of our coastal waterways.

12. First Responder Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support

Gloucester County urges the General Assembly to provide additional resources that would assist local governments with the recruitment, retention, training, and support of

first responders such as law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel, and 9-1-1 dispatchers.

13. Addition of judgeship for the 9th Circuit

Gloucester County, along with other localities in the 9th Judicial Circuit, supports the appointment of an additional judgeship to help offset increasing workloads, population growth and need for special courts such as behavioral health docket and drug treatment court.