

2016 Legislative Program



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2016 Legislative Program Virginia Association of Counties

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VACo's 2016 Overarching Legislative Priority Position

Increase Education Funding

To assure each child in Virginia a quality education necessary for their success, VACo calls upon the Governor and General Assembly to fully fund the Standards of Quality as recommended by the Board of Education and the Standards of Accreditation.

The provision of a quality education for all Virginia's children is the most important function of state and local government. When adjusted for inflation, state per pupil spending on public education is less than funding levels in FY 2005. With increased educational mandates, increased students and state policy changes that decreased education funding local school divisions have had to eliminate important academic programs, cut instructional and support staff, and increase class sizes, despite strong local efforts to improve efficiencies in public education. VACo looks forward to working with the Governor and General Assembly to address these serious challenges facing public education in our Commonwealth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Priorities

Land Use/Growth Management Tools

VACo supports maintaining local authority to plan and regulate land use and opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities. VACo supports legislation that grants localities additional tools to adequately meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development without burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through increased real estate taxes. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all counties, adequate public facilities provisions in subdivision ordinances, state funds for the purchase of development rights, and real estate transfer charges.

Enhanced Coordination between Workforce System and K12

VACo supports a statewide effort to bring together localities and the key education, business and workforce development stakeholders to explore opportunities to make systemic changes that will increase the focus on career and technical education in K12 that meets the needs of local and regional economic development efforts. County officials desire to work in partnership with the state, the community college system and the business community to evaluate and implement policy changes that will lead to increased employment opportunities for the Commonwealth's students and an increased pool of talent with the necessary training for our Commonwealth's current and prospective businesses. This statewide effort should create better coordination of funding streams, incentives and cultural changes that will lead to an increase in the number students leaving the K12 system with workforce ready credentials. VACo also supports innovative models for schools to give academic credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, certificates or licensure from an approved education or training provider.

Positions

Affordable and Workforce Housing

VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and appropriate incentives to assist localities in fostering affordable housing, as well as workforce housing for employees such as teachers and first responders.

Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID)

VACo supports full funding for the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID), which is a critical tool for attracting and retaining agriculture related businesses in Virginia.

Commonwealth Opportunity Fund and VEDP

VACo supports full funding of the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, which is a critical tool for attracting and retaining businesses in Virginia. VACo also supports full operational funding for the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), which will lead to robust project development, higher wage employment opportunities, a broadened tax base, partnership with local governments and increased governmental revenues.

Defense Funding

VACo supports maintaining federal Defense spending. Further cuts to military spending will impact our nation's security and negatively impact economic growth in counties throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Disclosure of Underlying Zoning to Property Purchasers

VACo supports legislation that adds language to the Code of Virginia that notifies purchasers of residential property to exercise due diligence on the zoning classification or permitted uses of parcels adjacent to the subject parcel.

Economic Development

VACo supports continued federal and state funding and technical assistance for infrastructure investments and economic development programs as effective means for enhancing business development in the Commonwealth. VACo supports economic development policies that bolster local and regional development efforts.

Impacts of Federal and Military Facilities

VACo supports maintaining federal and state funding and technical assistance to mitigate the impacts on counties affected by federal budget cuts and to sustain current and future federal facilities in Virginia. VACo supports state and local partnerships to work to prevent encroachment and non-compatible land uses next to military installations. VACo also supports workforce training and retraining for programs that support Defense activities in Virginia.

Local Authority to Promulgate Civil Penalties for all Types of Onsite Sewage Treatment Systems

VACo supports legislation that allows localities to promulgate a schedule of civil penalties for different types of sewage treatment systems.

Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program

VACo supports an onsite sewage program at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) that protects public health and the environment in all regions of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should give special focus to addressing the challenge of failing septic systems. The state's program should allow localities to develop and implement policies that support the state's program. VACo supports the private sector providing onsite sewage system design, installation and repair services, as long as the services can be

provided at affordable rates and in a timely manner, and as long as VDH continues to provide these direct services as well.

Natural Gas Pipelines

VACo supports federal and state efforts to ensure that counties are partners in the route selection process.

Regional Cooperation

VACo supports maintaining state funding and additional grants of authority to promote regional initiatives. VACo also supports state funding for Virginia's planning district commissions, which play a key role in addressing regional challenges.

Residential Property Disclosure Statement of Wastewater System

VACo supports legislation that adds language related to wastewater system (onsite sewage system) and conducting due diligence of costs to the residential property disclosure statement.

Siting of Utilities

VACo supports requiring utilities to seek input from localities and property owners before any actions to construct, modify or enlarge their facilities.

State Corporation Commission Public Hearings

VACo supports changes to the Code of Virginia to require a local public hearing, by request of a local governing body, for State Corporation Commission proceedings associated with approval of utility applications.

Workforce Development

Counties support flexibility for workforce programs to meet the specific workforce challenges identified by the public and private sector at the local and regional level and continued funding for Virginia's workforce system. VACo supports state efforts to fund, encourage and facilitate local and regional efforts to convene and facilitate cooperation between the business community and other numerous stakeholders involved in Virginia's workforce investment system. VACo supports applying credit recognition and state incentives for both certification, training or qualified credentialing and credit course hours.

EDUCATION

Priority

Education Funding

VACo urges the General Assembly to provide full state funding for public education including the Standards of Quality (SOQ) as recommended by the Board of Education, 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 the other core services. The state must recognize that in FY 2014 local school divisions spent \$3.6 billion above required local effort.

VACo supports the current practice whereby all year-end funds appropriated to the school divisions by the locality revert to the locality, retaining discretion with the governing body to evaluate and approve the reallocation of year-end fund balances.

Positions

Composite Index Appeal process

VACo supports legislation that would establish an appeals process for local governments to challenge computation of the Local Composite Index.

Composite Index, Use Value

VACo supports legislation to adjust the calculation of the Local Composite Index for public school funding by directing the Department of Education to adjust its funding calculations for the local ability to pay by using the use-value assessment of real property, instead of the true value, in localities that have adopted use-value taxation.

Charter Schools

VACo opposes Senate Joint Resolution 256 that provides authority for the State Board of Education to establish charter schools.

Funding Support Personnel

In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its obligation to fully fund the support side of K-12. Since 2009, Virginia has implemented sizable structural budget cuts to K-12, particularly in the area of support, costing localities more than \$1.7 billion per biennium statewide. VACo supports full restoration of these cuts, including: elimination of the funding cap on support positions; restoring the inflation factor for non-personal support costs; and full reinstatement of the Cost of Competing (COCA) for support staff. Adequate state funding for support staff and operations is critically important for the operation of any school system.

Library system

VACo supports maintaining the level of funding of financial aid to the library system at levels budgeted for FY 16 and FY 17.

School Resources Officers

VACo supports funding that would serve as an incentive for local school divisions to hire School Resource Officers (SROs) to assure the protection of Virginia's school children.

ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Priority

Water Quality Improvement Funding

VACo supports effective partnerships among and across all levels of government to improve water quality.

VACo urges state and federal agencies to consider impacts on local governments of any initiatives intended to reduce loadings of pollutants into state waters from both point and non-point sources. In order for comprehensive, watershed-wide water quality improvement strategies to be effective, major and reliable forms of financial and technical assistance from federal and state governments will be necessary. VACo supports the goal of improved water quality, but will oppose provisions of any strategy that penalizes local governments by withdrawing current forms of financial assistance or imposing monitoring, management or similar requirements on localities without providing sufficient resources to accomplish those processes. VACo opposes the imposition of a state fee, tax or surcharge on water, sewer, solid waste or any service provided by a local government or authority.

Positions

Agriculture Production

VACo supports increased availability of local food for purchase. To accomplish this, VACo supports the establishment of farmers' markets and the supplemental nutritional assistance program (SNAP) for purchases at farmers' markets, policies to increase direct delivery of food from growers to consumers and funding for the design and construction of regional processing facilities to facilitate delivery of locally-produced food.

Aquifer protection

VACo supports initiatives by the state to assure adoption of actions to reduce high chloride concentrations and loss of artesian head pressure in Virginia's aquifers. VACo also requests that the Commonwealth conduct a review of regulations, and promote education to promote reclamation of water on a local level for industrial and irrigation uses to offset future demands on all ground and surface water used for human consumption in the Commonwealth.

Biosolids

VACo contends that the land application of biosolids, when conducted properly, provides important benefits to the public and Virginia's agricultural sector. To reduce risks that might occur because of improper land application, VACo supports an effective statewide program and regulations governing land application of biosolids that protect the environment, public health and safety. VACo also supports the ability of local

governments to monitor compliance with such regulations. To address concerns of neighboring property owners, VACo supports the ability of local governments to suggest amendments to biosolids permits as they are being considered by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Dam safety

VACo supports dam safety regulations that do not impose unreasonable costs on dam owners whose structures meet current safety standards. VACo encourages DCR to institute reasonable calculations of probable maximum precipitation rainfall amounts that accurately identify at-risk structures and facilitate the most efficient targeting of scarce resources to the most needy structures. VACo supports programs that keep downstream owners and developers aware of potential inundation zones. VACo also supports sufficient state and federal funding for the repair and maintenance of dams.

Energy Efficiency

VACo endorses initiatives among all levels of government to reduce dependence upon foreign sources of energy, to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and to improve energy efficiency. VACo supports production of renewable energy in Virginia through the implementation of Renewable Portfolio Standards. VACo also supports responsible policies that enable coal and natural gas extraction, processing and transport while protecting agriculture and water resources.

Hydraulic fracturing

Advances in technology for the extraction of natural gas known as “hydraulic fracturing” has the potential to tap vast reserves in what are known as the Marcellus shale and Taylorsville Basin deposits. Concerns about how the process of hydraulic fracturing could impact both public and private groundwater supplies have been raised both regionally and nationally. VACo supports a state regulatory program that addresses these concerns while protecting the authority of local governments to regulate and/or ban this type of mining activity through their land use ordinances. Specifically, VACo supports a regulatory program with the following components:

- A requirement for permit applicants to provide certification to the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy that the activity and associated activities are consistent with applicable local ordinances;
- Authority for local governments to require documentation that all state requirements are met as a condition for local approval;
- Requirements for operators of hydraulic fracturing operations to demonstrate adequate financial assurance to ensure the availability of adequate resources to correct any damages that could result from drilling operations;
- Through a portion of permit fee revenues, establish a state fund to defray local costs that would be associated with the training of first responders as preparation for emergencies stemming from fracturing activities; and

- To assure continuity in protection of health and natural resources, that provisions in the Memorandum of Agreement between DMME and DEQ of August 12, 2014 be strengthened and perpetually institutionalized by statute or regulation.

Invasive Species

VACo supports adequate funding to implement the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan. The Plan identifies strategies to prevent and control damage caused by invasive species.

Land Conservation

VACo supports targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo also supports a Purchase of Development Rights program that includes state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and that provides incentives for landowners at all income levels to participate in the program. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forestal land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

Large utility projects (pipelines)

VACo supports the provision of adequate direction and resources for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to improve monitoring and enforcement of Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater requirement by entities constructing large-scale utility projects. DEQ should conduct a review of the annual standards and specifications and construction general permit requirements for those projects to determine if they are providing adequate protection of water quality and natural resources.

Local Regulation of Timbering

VACo supports legislation to clarify that, once a subdivision plan is submitted for local approval at the request of the property owner for a development project, any timbering on the property is subject to such local requirements as erosion and sediment control ordinances, stormwater management controls and other regulations pertaining to development.

Non-point Source Pollution

VACo supports a well-financed state program to address the problem of non-point source runoff from agricultural operations. The program should effectively encourage implementation of priority best management practices such as nutrient management planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming and development of forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

Noxious weeds

VACo supports amendments to the definition of “noxious weeds” to enable a wider number of known invasive plants to be considered for regulation by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), with consideration of any commercial impacts to Virginia growers and retailers, so that sales and transport of

designated invasive plants can be prohibited in a manner that helps protect parks and green spaces, with negligible impacts to Virginia's nursery industry.

Onsite Wastewater Systems

VACo supports legislation ensuring that potential buyers of real property are told about the type, size and maintenance requirements and associated costs of the wastewater systems on the property prior to the signing of the initial sales contract and the recordation of engineered systems plat and deed at the time of sale.

Recycling

VACo supports the development of additional efforts by the state to develop markets for recycled materials.

Southern Rivers Watershed

VACo supports continued funding for the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program to improve water quality in non-Chesapeake Bay watersheds.

Stormwater programs

VACo supports adequate funding to enable local governments to meet ongoing costs associated with local stormwater management programs that became effective July 1, 2014. VACo believes it will be critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the fee structure in the Virginia Stormwater Management Permit regulations as the chief source of revenue for funding local stormwater management programs.

VACo strongly opposes any legislation by the 2016 General Assembly that would amend any or all components of the Stormwater Management Laws that don't fully satisfy the resource and funding needs of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to administer, enforce and maintain the Stormwater Management Laws. VACo further opposes any legislation that would be in conflict with HB 1173/SB 423 that passed the 2014 General Assembly and that would impose any additional mandates or financial burdens upon local governments.

VACo also supports legislation to:

- Amend Section 62.1-44.15:48 of the Code of Virginia to remove the requirement that proceeds from penalties must be used only for purposes mandated under that section of the Code.
- Remove the requirement from the Construction General Permit that permittees must comply with Virginia's post construction standards for water quality.
- Amend Section 62.1-44.15:28 of the Code of Virginia to give localities the ability to waive the state's portion of the VSMP fees if a locality waiver policy has been implemented by a locality and approved by the Board. VACo also requests a new locality/state workload analysis to justify the state's portion from the stormwater

permit fee. The new analysis should address long-term responsibilities placed on localities that previous studies ignored.

- Amend Virginia's Stormwater Management Law that would distribute a maximum of 10 percent of statewide stormwater fees revenue to the Virginia Stormwater Management Fund with the remaining 90 percent remaining with local governments.
- Amend Section 62.1-44.15:33 of the Code of Virginia to mandate that the State Water Control Board consider long-term maintenance costs of a Best Management practice when approving a local stormwater program.

Uranium Mining

VACo supports continuation of a moratorium on uranium mining and milling within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

VACo supports sufficient funding for the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

VACo supports legislation that would increase funding for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation through transfer fees and other dedicated sources of revenue.

Water Supply Planning

VACo supports appropriations adequate to ensure full funding by the state for the ongoing development and implementation of state-mandated water supply plans.

FINANCE

Priority

Local Finances

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes. VACo requests county government representation on all study or legislative commissions that impact local government revenues or services. VACo opposes mandated new or expanded funding requirements on counties.

Positions

County Authority Including Equal Taxation

VACo supports granting counties equal taxing authority enjoyed by cities and towns to enact local excise taxes without referendum.

Eliminate the State capture of local fines and forfeitures

VACo requests the repeal of budget language authorizing the capture of local fines and forfeitures to the state treasury. The money to be seized in FY 2016 is not budgeted for any purpose in the Appropriation Act. This legislative action removed a source of local revenue for many localities.

Fiscal Impact Statements

VACo supports changes to the rules of the House and Senate that would require proposed legislation that may have a fiscal impact on localities to be introduced no later than the first day of session.

Funding for State Mandated Positions and Jails

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations for constitutional officers and state mandated positions. VACo further requests that the state budget increase jail per diems in the FY 2015-2018 biennial budget to 2010 levels. Additionally, VACo requests the state reinstate the definition of state-responsible inmates to felons with sentences of one year or more, fully fund its share of per diem payments in the introduced budget, and pay the medical costs of inmates using a cost-effective program jointly funded at the federal and state levels.

Line of Duty

VACo calls on the General Assembly to fully fund the Line of Duty Act (LODA) obligations and adopt the recommendations proposed by JLARC to improve the administration of the act in order to ensure the long-term fiscal stability of the program.

Reimbursement for Prior “Local Aid to the Commonwealth”

VACo commends the Governor and General Assembly for eliminating the “Local Aid to the Commonwealth” in the 2015 session of the General Assembly and opposes any reinstatement of this burden on local governments. Since 2009, local governments returned \$190 million in funding for state mandates services through “Local Aid to the Commonwealth”. VACo requests the state consider reimbursement to localities for these past reductions that occurred during difficult budget times for the state and localities.

General Government

Priority

Broadband

VACo urges the Commonwealth and the Federal Government to assist communities in their efforts to deploy universal affordable access to broadband for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas while preserving local land use, permitting, fees and other local authority. Widespread deployment of broadband should be a top priority for the Commonwealth to ensure competitive economic advantages, improve public safety, provide quality educational opportunities and facilitate telemedicine and other modern health care initiatives. VACo calls upon the Commonwealth to develop a comprehensive state wide plan that identifies all the impediments that can be solved through local and state legislation and an estimate of the costs for overcoming these impediments.

VACo supports the following key policies that support local broadband efforts:

- Increased support for planning and implementation grants to localities with priority given to open access networks through initiatives such as the Department of Housing and Community Development's Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative.
- State support of local and regional authorities created under the Virginia Wireless Service Authorities Act and the preservation of powers granted under the act.
- Support for the Virginia Resources Authority and other favorable financing mechanisms for broadband projects.
- A reporting requirement for all Internet service providers in Virginia to provide address level broadband access information to CIT bi-annually to correct the accuracy of the statewide broadband map which is currently deficient due to Federal Communications Commission standards which only require providers to report on broadband availability at the census block level resulting in an overstatement of coverage particularly in rural areas.
- Continued state support for the broadband technical assistance support and research provided to localities and providers by the Center for Innovative Technology.
- Support linking broadband efforts for education and public safety to private sector efforts to serve businesses and residences.
- A focus on regulation to allow the provisioning of broadband services on utility poles that were approved by the SCC and the locality.
- A focus on requiring VDOT to provide right-of-way easements for the provisioning of broadband and access to underutilized dark fiber.
- A focus on requiring broadband to be accessible to every household in the state of Virginia through shared easements with utilities with local approval.

Positions

Annexation Moratorium

VACo supports full funding of the Commonwealth's HB 599 commitments. VACo also supports the continuation of the current moratorium on city annexations regardless of whether those commitments have been met. The moratorium has promoted more intergovernmental cooperation between cities and counties, allowed counties to plan for future growth and economic development within their borders and has allowed counties to be able to protect their tax base in order to provide needed services to citizens.

Collective Bargaining for Public Employees

VACo opposes any effort to mandate collective bargaining for public employees.

CyberSecurity

VACo supports state and federal efforts to mitigate the increasing cyber threats faced by both the private and public sector. VACo urges state and federal policymakers to assist local governments in cooperative, incentive based efforts to share information and best practices to meet these emerging challenges.

Dillon Rule/Local Authority

VACo supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule by granting and maintaining local authority and autonomy including land use matters, revenue measures, procurement and other issues of local concern. The General Assembly should extend powers currently granted to some local governments to all other local governments.

Election Costs and Districts

VACo supports legislation that would decrease the costs of elections to localities. These costs include primaries, voting equipment, personnel and voting places. Cost reduction solutions include requiring parties to pay for primary elections, having one date for primary elections, using paper ballots, establishing countywide voting places and other similar measures. The state should provide adequate funding to localities for optical scan and other voting equipment and registrar costs. VACo also supports legislation to minimize or eliminate Split Voting Precincts.

Ethics Reform

The Virginia Association of Counties supports common sense efforts to strengthen Virginia's public ethics and conflicts of interest laws. VACo also supports efforts to make sure current and future changes to these laws are applicable and practical at the local level.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

VACo opposes changes to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act that would impose additional burdens on localities.

Grievance Hearings

VACo supports legislation authorizing localities to utilize an administrative hearing officer instead of a three-member panel. VACo also supports providing immunity to local government employees, officers, volunteers, administrative hearing officers and panel members for claims arising out of participation in personnel grievance procedures.

Immigration Reform

VACo maintains a strong commitment to ensuring the security and safety of our communities. Legislative reforms must recognize the contributions of immigrants to a complex economy, as well as the costs associated with welcoming immigrants into our communities. The U.S. Congress must enact comprehensive immigration reform that provides a funding stream sufficient to address the fiscal impact on state and local governments for any guest worker program and earned legalization program. The state and local governments require a national immigration system that is fully funded at the federal level, recognizes the realities of the marketplace, eases the fiscal stress on states and localities and properly secures our borders. It is important that the federal government establish a clear and understandable path to citizenship for those who are eligible.

Interoperability

VACo supports the state's goal that agencies and their representatives at the local, regional, state and federal levels will be able to communicate using compatible systems to respond more effectively during day-to-day operations and major emergencies. Local governments require dedicated federal and state funding sources to achieve this goal.

Pay Day Lending

VACo supports legislation to set a total cap of 25 percent for all interest, fees and other charges for payday lending and other similar businesses such as car title loans.

Population Statistics

VACo requests that the Commonwealth use the most current population statistics available for the purposes of determining state aid to those localities that have experienced population growth in the 10-year period between the decennial enumerations. During that period, population statistics from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, the American Community Survey and from other established entities should be used by the Commonwealth. The General Assembly should consider the many fixed costs of services in determining aid to those localities that have remained stable or lost population.

Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement

VACo supports legislation to reduce required advertising for public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an alternative to newspaper advertising.

Public Safety – Body Worn Cameras

VACo supports maintaining the ability for local governments to adopt policies regarding body worn cameras that reflect local needs and fiscal realities. Localities should be able to decide: whether to buy body cameras for law enforcement; on the policies for the use of the cameras; how long to retain video; and the rules for when the public may have access (within the overarching rules of the Freedom of Information Act). The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services should work to develop model policies for body worn cameras.

VACo supports legislation to amend the Virginia Freedom of Information act to clarify that local law enforcement agencies have the authority to withhold from mandatory disclosure under FOIA those records, including body worn camera and dashcam video, that contain identifying information of a personal, medical or financial nature where the release of such information could jeopardize the safety or privacy of any person. VACo urges the state to take into account the large amount of data and costs of storage when establishing a retention period for these records.

Sovereign Immunity

VACo opposes any substantive change in local governments' present defense of sovereign immunity. VACo opposes bringing counties under the Virginia Tort Claims Act.

State Assistance for Police Departments

VACo supports increasing state assistance for police departments through "599" Aid to Localities. This funding is designed to equalize state funding between counties in which the sheriff department provides law enforcement and those cities, counties and towns with a police department.

Unfunded Mandates

VACo opposes unfunded mandates and shifting of fiscal responsibility from the state to localities for existing programs by the Commonwealth. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored. When legislation with a cost to localities is passed by the General Assembly, the cost should be borne by the Commonwealth, and the legislation should contain a sunset clause providing that the mandate is not binding on localities until funding by the Commonwealth is provided.

Workers' Compensation Medical Costs

VACo supports the adoption of Medicare-based fee schedules for setting medical provider fees in worker's compensation cases in Virginia, instead of the prevailing community rate standard now used.

Health & Human Resources

Priority

Health and Human Resources Funding

VACo supports transparent state policies and funding to ensure the Commonwealth's at-risk families have access to high quality and appropriate services. The Commonwealth should fully fund localities for state mandated human services and provide the necessary program flexibility to enable localities to provide comprehensive and case-tailored services.

Positions

Aging/Long-Term Care

VACo supports efforts that allow the elderly to remain at home in a safe and secure environment. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide sufficient funding for companion services, in-home services and home delivered meals.

Behavioral Health Care

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow community services boards to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care.

Children's Services Act

VACo supports the development of policies by the State Executive Council that provide clear guidelines in its process of developing and adopting policy. These guidelines should include specific time frames for various stages in the process, expectations for public notice and public comments, and expectations for consideration of fiscal impact on local government.

Early Intervention

VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an entitlement program that provides services for Virginia's infants and toddlers. VACo also requests the General Assembly address funding concerns by increasing state general funding. Underfunding this entitlement program puts pressure on local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.

Group Homes

VACo supports the ability of a locality to hold a public meeting when a group home is established in the locality's jurisdiction. Further, VACo encourages the state to enforce appropriate regulation of group homes.

Healthcare

VACo supports continued state funding for offered dental care, school nurses and preventive services and maternal and child health programs through local health departments and local school systems. VACo encourages the state to prepare for emergency health services access to care and develop and fund incentives that would alleviate the nursing shortages felt in many communities.

Local EMS Involvement

VACo supports increased local involvement in state EMS planning to ensure statewide needs are met.

Prevention Services

VACo supports increased state general funding for startup costs associated with community-based service programs. VACo recognizes that programs, such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and the Resource Mother, as important models and requests the General Assembly provide additional funding for these home-based activities. Reductions in prevention programs will put numerous youth at risk of high-end CSA placements.

Telehealth

VACo supports the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration.

Transportation

Priorities

Devolution of Secondary Roads

VACo opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that would transfer to counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new and existing roads.

Local-State Transportation Funding and Cooperation

VACo believes it is important to closely monitor the implementation of HB 2 and HB 1887 and determine whether process improvements need to be made. VACo supports the continuation of the state's investment in infrastructure statewide. While HB 1887 provided some additional funding for transit services, VACo supports the full funding of transit systems by the state to meet critical transit needs. VACo is also concerned about the condition of secondary roads throughout the Commonwealth, is appreciative of funding in the Six Year Improvement Plan to meet some of these needs, and supports additional funding for these efforts.

Additionally, VACo is concerned that the 2012 transportation bill provides VDOT and the CTB the ability to decide whether a local transportation plan is consistent with the Commonwealth's priorities. VACo wants to ensure that land use planning remains a local responsibility.

Revenue Sharing

VACo is concerned about plans to significantly reduce funding for the Revenue Sharing program over the next six years. Reducing funding for the program will discourage local governments from seeking non-VDOT sources of revenue to meet their transportation needs.

Positions

Billboards

VACo supports a requirement that proposed billboards in the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) right of way conform to local zoning and other applicable ordinances and local approval processes.

Corridors of Statewide Significance

VACo opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance.

Highway Tolls

VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia's interstate highways until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has identified and compared all

available funding alternatives and has adopted a proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding sources.

Inter-Directional Signage Program

VACo supports a requirement that any signs installed under VDOT's Inter-directional Sign Program, including the Tourist Oriented Directional Signs Program, conform to local ordinances, including any local approval processes.

Maintenance Priorities

VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

Parking

VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating, including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on subdivision streets.

Rail Enhancement Fund

VACo supports authority for counties to approve Rail Enhancement Fund projects funded by the state and constructed within their jurisdictions.

Railway Crossings

VACo supports efforts to safely improve mobility issues on roads that cross railway lines.

Road Construction and Maintenance

VACo supports legislation that would prohibit VDOT from requiring localities to administer any transportation project without the consent of the local governing body.

Transportation Network Companies

VACo supports state regulation of transportation network companies as needed to ensure proper safety, liability, cleanliness, insurance coverage, local revenue, consideration of access for disabled riders, and equitable service in communities. VACo also supports the option of continued regulation of taxi companies at the local level.

Truck Size and Weight

VACo strongly opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.

Use of Transportation Tax Revenue

VACo opposes taking any HB2313 transportation tax revenues for the use of non-transportation purposes.