

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

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Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Support Needed for VACo Budget Amendments

Several budget amendments were introduced at VACo's request. Budget amendments have begun to be heard in the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees in advance of the money committees reporting their respective budgets on February 5.

Calls are needed in support of the following amendments:

VRS Teacher Plan

[Item 475 #1h \(Kilgore\)](#) | [Item 475 #2h \(Kory\)](#) | [Item 139 #3s \(Carrico\)](#) | [Item 475 #5s \(Chafin\)](#) | [Item 475 #6s \(Saslaw\)](#) – Returns to the 2012 schedule for phasing in full funding of the actuarial rates for the Virginia Retirement System teacher plan, which would bring the rates to full funding in FY 2019, rather than the accelerated plan agreed to in 2016, which would bring the rates to full funding in FY 2018. This action would save the state approximately \$50 million in FY 2018, and would save localities at least \$76 million (for the SOQ-recognized positions).

Standards of Quality

[Item 130 #1h \(Sickles\)](#) | [Item 130 #1s \(Howell\)](#) – Requires the Secretaries of Education and Finance to work with key General Assembly committee chairs to develop a plan to phase in full funding of the recent Board of Education recommendations for the Standards of Quality, where those standards reflect prevailing practice (staffing standards for elementary school principals and assistant principals, and lifting the cap on support positions that was put in place during the recession).

Study the Adequacy of Resources to School Divisions

[Item 137 #1h \(O'Quinn\)](#) | [Item 137 #1s \(Chafin\)](#) – Requests \$1 million for an adequacy study to determine the appropriate level of resources needed for school divisions to meet state accountability requirements. The study is to examine

particular challenges for schools, such as the effect of concentrations of poverty and declining enrollment, and identify the funding required to meet the Standards of Learning, Standards of Accreditation, and Standards of Quality, including potential weighted funding for students with special needs, including economically disadvantaged students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program, students with limited English proficiency, and students eligible for special education services.

Local Representation in Mental Health System Evaluation

[Item 284 #3h \(Watts\)](#) | [Item 284 #3s \(Barker\)](#) – Ensures local government representation on the stakeholders group that will be developing the contract for a plan to redesign the community mental health system.

Children’s Services Act

[Item 285 #1h \(Hester\)](#) | [Item 285 #1s \(Hanger\)](#) – Eliminates the cap on funds for wraparound services for children in special education through the Children’s Services Act. The cap makes the process of requesting and using the funds cumbersome, but localities that make use of the funds appear to increase their ability to serve children in their neighborhood schools without resorting to out-of-school placements.

Children’s Services Act Fund Match Rate

[Item 285 #2h \(Hester\)](#) | [Item 285 #2s \(Hanger\)](#) – Reduces the match rate for special education wraparound services to the community-based rate rather than the base rate. This action would return these services to their original classification and was supported by the State and Local Advisory Team and the State Executive Council in fall 2016.

Remove Local Match in CSA for Residential Services

[Item 285 #5h \(Boysko\)](#) | [Item 285 #3s \(Barker\)](#) – Eliminates the local Medicaid match in the Children’s Services Act, which is currently required for residential treatment and treatment foster care.

Department of Corrections PILT

[Item 394 #3s \(Ruff\)](#) – Provides \$1.4 million for the cost of service charges for Department of Corrections facilities and eliminates language that exempts the Department of Corrections from the requirement to pay service charges levied by a locality in lieu of taxes to cover the cost of services provided to state correctional facilities.

Police Department Funding

[Item 400 #1h \(James\)](#) | [Item 400 #1s \(Wagner\)](#) – Provides \$5.7 million to increase “HB 599” funding (aid to localities with police departments) to match the growth in General Fund revenues, as required by statute.

Other Priority Amendments VACo Supports

Stormwater Assistance Fund

[Item 370 #1h \(Landes\)](#) | [Item 370 #2h \(Lingamfelter\)](#) – Provides \$20 million in General Funds for the State and Local Assistance Fund for stormwater projects. [Item C-48.10 #6h \(Yancey\)](#) and [Item C-48.10 #1s \(Hanger\)](#) provide for \$20 million in bond proceeds for the same purpose.

Water Quality Improvement Fund

[Item 364 #6h \(Landes\)](#) – Provides \$8.2 million for agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP), \$8.2 million in FY 2018. [Item 364 #2s \(Hanger\)](#) provides \$8.2 million for agricultural BMPs, \$8.2 million in FY 2018. [Item 364 #4h \(Lingamfelter\)](#) provides \$10 million for agricultural BMPs, \$10 million in FY 2018.

VACo Members – Please call members of the [House Appropriations](#) and [Senate Finance Committees](#) to express support.

[House Appropriations Members:](#) [Jones \(Chairman\)](#), [Landes \(Vice Chair\)](#), [Ingram](#), [Cox](#), [O'Bannon](#), [Lingamfelter](#), [Poindexter](#), [Massie](#), [Peace](#), [Greason](#), [Knight](#), [Anderson](#), [Garrett](#), [Stolle](#), [Rush](#), [Torian](#), [Hester](#), [Sickles](#), [James](#), [Carr](#), [McQuinn](#), [Aird](#)

[Senate Finance Committee Members:](#) [Norment \(Co-Chair\)](#), [Hanger \(Co-Chair\)](#), [Howell](#), [Saslaw](#), [Lucas](#), [Newman](#), [Ruff](#), [Wagner](#), [McDougle](#), [Vogel](#), [Carrico](#), [Obenshain](#), [Barker](#), [Dunnavant](#), [Stuart](#), [Dance](#)

[VACo Members – Share your thoughts on FlagPoll.](#)

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Bill Expands ‘Agritourism’ Definition

VACo opposes [SB 1491 \(Stuart\)](#), which defines "agritourism activity" to include the rental of a single-family residence for a period of at least one week. VACo opposes this measure because it further reduces local land use regulatory authority. Under legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2014 – [HB 268 \(Orrock\)](#) and [SB 51 \(Stuart\)](#) – localities were restricted from regulating any “agritourism activity” (as defined in [Section 3.2-6400](#) of the [Code of Virginia](#)) unless the operation has a “substantial impact upon the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.” The 2014 legislation also prohibited localities from requiring a special exception, special use permit or any “administrative permit” not required by state law.

Defining these rental properties as Agritourism will severely limit local land use authority and will prevent localities from regulation of these short-term rentals. The bill has been referred to the [Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee](#) where it is likely to be taken up during its meeting on Thursday afternoon, January 26, in Senate Room B of the General Assembly Building 30 minutes after adjournment.

VACo Members are urged to contact the Senators on the [Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee](#) to oppose SB 1491.

[VACo Members – Share your thoughts on FlagPoll.](#)

VACo Contact: [Larry Land, CAE](#) and [Phyllis Errico, CAE](#)

Bill Creates Study on Recycling

[SB 1518 \(Lewis\)](#) expands the scope of the recycling programs supported by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to include beneficial use, defined as “the use or reuse of a material that otherwise would become solid waste in a manufacturing process or as landfill cover, aggregate substitute, fuel substitute, or fill material.”

The bill provides that any proposal for a certain type of local recycling grant shall be deemed to meet the eligibility requirements if it includes provisions to increase recycling for beneficial reuse through a public-private cooperative program. SB 1518 also changes from every four years to every two years the frequency in which localities and solid waste planning units serving populations of less than 100,000 are required to submit a recycling survey report.

VACo is interested in receiving any comments from localities with populations of less than 100,000 that might be affected by this provision.

The bill also directs DEQ to evaluate the effectiveness of state and local recycling programs and establishes a deadline of October 1, 2018, for a report with recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

[VACo Members – Share your thoughts on FlagPoll.](#)

VACo Contact: [Larry Land, CAE](#)

Bill Allows Sales of Lifelong Dog Licenses

[HB 1477 \(Orrock\)](#) authorizes local governments to provide for a lifetime dog or cat license. The maximum license charged by localities for a lifetime license at

\$50. The bill was unanimously recommended for reporting on a 7-0 vote on January 23 in the of the [House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee's Agriculture Subcommittee](#). VACo spoke in support of the measure.

[VACo Members – Share your thoughts on FlagPoll.](#)

VACo Contact: [Larry Land, CAE](#)

Key Dates for 2017 General Assembly Session

- **January 11:** General Assembly convenes at noon. Prefiled legislation must be submitted by 10 a.m.; this is also the last day to file bills dealing with the Virginia Retirement System or legislation creating or continuing a study.
- **January 13:** Budget amendments by General Assembly members must be submitted by 5 p.m.
- **January 20:** All bills must be filed by 3 p.m.
- **February 5:** The Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees must report their respective budgets.
- **February 7:** Crossover (deadline for legislation to pass its chamber of origin)
- **February 9:** Deadline for each chamber to complete work on its budget
- **February 20:** Deadline for committee action on legislation
- **February 25:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*
- **April 5:** Reconvened session to consider the Governor's amendments and vetoes

Governor McAuliffe to speak at VACo County Government Day

This is our day to advocate for counties at the General Assembly. Join us at VACo County Government Day on Thursday, February 2! Registration opens at 11 a.m. and the event kicks off with a boxed lunch at noon. Our keynote speaker will be The Honorable Governor Terry McAuliffe who will address attendees on issues

that affect counties.

VACo staff will provide legislative briefs before charging all present to meet with their General Assembly representatives that afternoon. For information on how to reach your representatives, see the [Virginia House of Delegates Member Listings](#) and the [Senate of Virginia](#) websites. Find information about VACo's positions in the [2017 Legislative Program](#), created by VACo Steering Committees, and adopted at our Annual Business Meeting. We will distribute our VACo County Government Day Bulletin at the event.

We encourage all counties to participate in the legislative process - hear briefs on the issues and make appointments to speak with your representatives that afternoon. The VACo County Government Day event should last no later than 1:30 p.m.

Register for [VACo County Government Day online](#) or by faxing in a [registration form](#) to 804.788.0083. Register early and show the state who's coming to town!

For rooming information, check out [our dedicated online room reservation page](#) or call 1.800.THE.OMNI and use code "VACo County Government Day" to unlock our special event rate. Omni Richmond is participating in the HUNGER program, which will provide one week of meals to a family of four for every online reservation. Consider reserving online to help a family during this season. Room Reservation cut off is 5 p.m. January 18. Room rate is not guaranteed after that date.

We are also introducing sponsorship opportunities for the February events. Check back soon, or contact [Amy Sales](#) for more information.

VACo Contact: [Amy Sales, CMP](#)