

ALERT

Capitol Contact

2019 Virginia General Assembly



Friday, February 1, 2019

Oppose Bill that Adds 'Weddings' to Definition of 'Agritourism Activity' and Thwarts Local Regulation

VACo opposes [HB 2364 \(Knight\)](#), which adds “weddings” to the definition of “Agritourism Activity” under Code of Virginia § 3.2-6400. This is the section of the Virginia Code that limits the liability of agritourism operators for the risks of agritourism activities.

More importantly for localities is the fact that anything defined as “Agritourism Activity” then triggers section 15.2-2288.6, which limits local regulation of agritourism activity. Defining weddings as agritourism impedes local authority to address things such as impacts on neighboring property, access, parking, noise, sanitary issues and other concerns.

HB 2364 advanced out of Committee, 11-9, and will be on the House floor for final vote on Monday.

ACTION REQUIRED – VACo members please contact your [Delegates](#) now to oppose HB 2364.

KEY POINTS

- Other activities in the section relate to actual agriculture while weddings clearly do not. This opens the door to adding more nonagricultural activities into the definition of “agritourism activity,” such as racetracks, concert venues and other

business and commercial activities without the ability to address the impact of the activity (land use, public safety, fire prevention).

- Puts the public at risk and unfairly affects neighboring properties.
- Most of these buildings do not meet the provisions of the building code, and weddings include large crowds, added electrical demands for food preparation, amplified music and lighting.
- There's no limit to the size and number of weddings that could take place if this bill passes.

Exempting these activities as agritourism activities raises a whole host of concerns for the locality. Currently weddings are occurring on agricultural land in some localities with the appropriate local regulation including special exception and conditional use permits so that impacts of this activity can be addressed.

Please contact your Delegates now to oppose.

KEY CONTACTS

[Virginia House of Delegates](#)

VACo Contact: [Phyllis Errico, Esq., CAE](#)