

Virginia Association of Counties

# 2020 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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# 2020 Legislative Program Virginia Association of Counties

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45 **VACo’s 2020 Overarching Legislative**  
46 **Priority Position**  
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49 **Equal Taxing Authority**

50 Counties provide the same core services, such as public education, human services, and  
51 public safety, to their residents as cities and towns, but have limited opportunities to  
52 raise revenue. VACo supports granting counties the same authority that is enjoyed by  
53 cities and towns to enact local taxes without referendum.  
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89 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**  
90 **PLANNING**

91  
92 **Priorities**

93  
94 **Broadband**

95 VACo urges the Commonwealth to provide adequate financial assistance to  
96 counties to build the necessary telecommunications infrastructure to deploy  
97 universal affordable access to the internet for all areas, particularly in  
98 underserved and rural areas. Additionally, VACo supports legislation that  
99 provides additional tools for counties to finance, build and operate open access  
100 networks in partnership with commercial internet service providers.  
101

102 **Proffers and Growth Management Tools**

103 VACo supports changes to the conditional zoning law to allow greater flexibility  
104 in the application process for determining fiscal impacts.

105 VACo also supports legislation that grants localities additional tools to  
106 adequately meet increasing needs for public services driven by new development  
107 without burdening current residents with the cost of new growth through  
108 increased real estate taxes. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee  
109 authority for all counties, and adequate public facilities provisions.  
110

111 **Utility-Scale Solar**

112 VACo supports returning the authority to counties to determine local tax  
113 incentives for utility-scale solar installations and opposes any expansion or  
114 extension of the state-mandated tax exemption on local property taxes for solar  
115 equipment. Additionally, VACo supports maintaining local authority to address  
116 all impacts associated with utility-scale projects.  
117

118 **Positions**

119  
120 **Land Use**

121 VACo supports maintaining local authority to plan and regulate land use and  
122 opposes any legislation that weakens these key local responsibilities.  
123

124 **Regulation of Home-based Businesses**

125 VACo opposes any legislation that limits or restricts local authority to regulate  
126 home-based businesses, including short-term rentals regardless of whether  
127 services or goods are purchased through an online hosting platform.  
128

129 **Affordable and Workforce Housing**

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

VACo supports economic development policies and programs that bolster local and regional development efforts by maintaining state funding, streamlining state and federal processes, and granting additional funding and authority to promote local and regional initiatives. This includes the provision of adequate funding for the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID); the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund; and the operations of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). VACo also supports state funding for Virginia’s planning district commissions and local cooperative extension offices, which play key roles in addressing regional challenges.

**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 that 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.

**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 and allow localities authority 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.

**Siting of Transmission Lines**

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

# EDUCATION

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## 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, where 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. Changes to school security and high school graduation standards will require additional resources to implement and those costs must be adequately funded by the state. VACo supports additional state resources and additional funding options for localities for capital and school construction costs.

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

### **Charter Schools**

VACo opposes legislation that removes authority from local school boards and divisions to establish charter schools.

### **Childhood Development and School Readiness**

VACo supports efforts to increase at-risk children’s access to high-quality, enriching learning environments, including more resources and flexibility for localities participating in programs like the Virginia Preschool Initiative and Head Start.

### **Critical thinking Skills**

VACo supports changes to educational programs and standards that rely less on standardized testing and more on critical thinking skills such as performance-based assessments.

### **Funding Support Personnel**

VACo 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. In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional staff, the Commonwealth should meet its obligation to fully fund K-12 support staff.



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**Library System**

VACo supports additional state resources for the funding of financial aid to the local library system.

**School Safety and Security**

VACo supports efforts to improve school safety and preparedness including establishing a Statewide School Safety Drill, for students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement, and other staff to engage in active shooter drills. VACo supports the development of model policies to provide guidance on active shooter drills and updates to school safety plans and drills. VACo supports dedicated state funding to improve school security for both capital and operational costs including funding that would serve as an incentive for local school divisions to hire additional Resource Officers, School Protection Officers, or other security personnel and measures.

**Special Education Regional Tuition Reimbursement Program**

VACo supports enhancing local capacity to serve children with high-level support needs in the least restrictive environment, including regional special education programs. VACo supports local flexibility in the structure of such programs. If a new model for the distribution of funding for special education students with intense support needs is implemented, such a model should be phased in gradually, with state dollars provided to enable school divisions that would otherwise experience reductions in funding to continue to meet federal maintenance of effort requirements.

**Teacher Shortage and Retention**

VACo urges the General Assembly to approve and fund strategies addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth. VACo supports a targeted approach to teacher shortage by prioritizing areas in critical need, as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. VACo supports using district-level data to determine how to best fill shortage gaps, especially in hard-to-staff divisions. VACo supports reducing burdens on the teacher workforce in the Commonwealth. VACo supports programs aimed at reducing student debt for teaching in public schools. VACo also supports programs that encourage teachers to stay in the profession including measures that provide mentorship, guidance and other forms of support for teachers in their first five years in the profession.

**Workforce-Ready Students**

VACo supports changes in curriculum and funding that will increase the number of students leaving the K-14 system with workforce-ready credentials. VACo supports incorporating career and technical education curriculum at the elementary school level. VACo supports high school students earning academic credit for participating in an internship, apprenticeship, credential, and other work programs. VACo supports innovative models for schools to give academic credit for students that earn industry workforce skills through certifications, or licensure from an approved education or training provider. VACo supports establishing partnerships to strengthen the school-to-workforce pipeline in a

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variety of ways including guaranteed employment opportunities with local businesses and learning opportunities shared between local community colleges and high schools.



# ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

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## Priority

### **Water Quality Improvement Funding**

VACo supports effective partnerships across all levels of government as well as adequate financial and technical assistance from the federal and state governments to improve water quality. VACo supports improved water quality but opposes strategies that penalize 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 supports efforts to continue to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay but opposes additional nutrient regulations on wastewater treatment facilities that are scientifically unsound, economically unfeasible, or unnecessary for meeting the Commonwealth’s goals. 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

### **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 supports a review of regulations and supports education initiatives that 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.

### **Biosolids**

VACo supports an effective statewide regulatory program governing land application of biosolids. Such a program should not infringe upon the authority of local governments to monitor compliance. VACo supports the ability of local governments to propose amendments to biosolids permits as they are considered by DEQ.

### **Conservation**

VACo encourages targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of land for conservation purposes. VACo supports the creation a Purchase of Development Rights program that provides state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and participation incentives for landowners. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

VACo supports voluntary state and federal conservation programs, including the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program, to assist producers with the implementation of best management practices.

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**Dam Safety**

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**

VACo supports renewable energy policies and energy efficiency measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lessen dependence upon foreign sources of energy, and improve the feasibility of using renewable energy, including efforts to remove barriers to municipal net metering. VACo supports legislation that encourages renewable energy production through the implementation of Renewable Portfolio Standards. VACo supports creative financing mechanisms that enable localities to implement their own renewable energy and energy efficiency programs and measures. VACo supports maintaining local zoning authority regarding renewable energy facilities and other utility projects to protect agricultural and other local considerations. Finally, VACo supports responsible policies that enable coal and natural gas extraction, processing, and transport while protecting agricultural interests and natural resources.

**Hydraulic Fracturing**

VACo supports a stringent state regulatory program for hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) that addresses the potential to tap into natural gas reserves in ways that protect public and private groundwater supplies and preserve local government authority to regulate and/or ban this type of mining activity through their land use ordinances. VACo supports transparency efforts that require the disclosure of all chemicals and chemical mixes used in the fracking process prior to their use.

**Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds**

VACo supports funding for, and the complete implementation of, the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan. VACo supports an amendment to the term, “noxious weeds,” enabling additional invasive plants to be considered for regulation. All programs and proposals should be evaluated for their commercial impact, allowing no more than a negligible impact on Virginia’s agricultural industry. Finally, VACo supports requiring better state prevention and mitigation practices.

**Large Utility Projects**

VACo supports the provision of adequate direction and resources for the state to improve monitoring and enforcement of Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater requirements by entities constructing large-scale utility projects. The state should conduct a review of the annual standards, specifications, and construction general permit requirements to determine adequate protection of water quality and natural resources.

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**Non-Point Source Pollution**

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

**Predator Control**

VACo urges state and federal agencies to support the agricultural industry by allowing farmers and producers sufficient flexibility when protecting livestock against predatory animals. VACo encourages the USDA Wildlife Services Division and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to allow producers access to the predator control tools required for the continuation of effective livestock production. VACo also supports USDA’s Livestock Indemnity Program and the financial relief it provides to producers who have lost livestock to the attacks of federally protected predators.

**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 state funding that enables local governments to fully satisfy the resource and funding needs associated with local stormwater management programs. VACo supports legislation that proposes creative and cost-effective stormwater management practices. VACo supports initiatives that clarify and modernize stormwater regulations and permitting processes, including measures that makes permitting more efficient, reevaluates the fee structure system, and allows for considerations of factors such as long-term maintenance costs. VACo supports legislation that proposes innovative solutions to facilitate compliance with stormwater standards in ways that promote economic development while achieving water quality goals.

**Tree Conservation and Replacement**

VACo supports expanding tree replacement and tree conservation statutes to include all localities in Virginia.

**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.

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**Uranium Mining**

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

**Technical Assistance**

VACo supports robust state funding for entities that provide critical resources and technical assistance to localities in their efforts to comply with environmental policies and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, organizations such as the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Planning District Commissions (PDCs).

**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. VACo does not support overly burdensome permitting processes or applications for water usage.

# FINANCE

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## **Priority**

### **Local Finance**

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes.

## **Positions**

### **Appeals of Tax Assessments**

VACo opposes proposals to make major changes to the current appeals processes for real or tangible personal property assessments, such as changes to the assessor’s presumption of correctness or the role of the state Tax Commissioner with respect to valuation of property.

### **Funding for State Mandated Positions and Jails**

The Commonwealth must meet its obligations to fund appropriate staffing for the state’s system of justice, to include clerks, magistrates, Commonwealth’s Attorneys, public defenders, district court employees, and probation office employees. In the absence of adequate state support for this critical function of government, localities are frequently placed in the untenable position of supplementing the justice system with local dollars in order to ensure its continued functioning.

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations and provide flexibility in the use of state funds for compensation of constitutional officers and state-supported local employees.

VACo requests that jail per diem funding in the 2020-2022 biennial state budget be increased to levels that better represent the costs of housing inmates and be adjusted for inflation in the future so that payments keep pace with rising costs. The current rates of \$4 per day for local-responsible inmates and \$12 per day for state-responsible inmates are inadequate and represent an underfunded mandate on counties. The Compensation Board estimated a total average daily cost of operating local and regional jails at \$85.83 per inmate in FY 2017, of which \$46.30 was contributed by localities.

VACo supports payment of the medical costs of inmates using a cost-effective program jointly funded at the federal and state levels. VACo supports streamlining the process of eligibility determination and enrollment for inmates who may qualify for Medicaid. VACo supports the provision of clinically appropriate health care for individuals incarcerated in local and regional jails; if the state establishes standards for the provision of health care, including behavioral health care, in local and regional jails, these standards should be adopted through the regulatory process with ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement, and the state must provide sufficient funding to allow these standards to be met.

553 **Funding for Payments of Service Charges in Lieu of Taxes for State**  
554 **Facilities**

555 VACo supports reinstating state payments (PILT) to counties that mitigate the  
556 impacts of state correctional and behavioral healthcare facilities on county  
557 revenue. VACo supports measures to ameliorate the effects of large amounts of  
558 other tax-exempt property on the local tax base.

559  
560 **Implementation of Medicaid Expansion**

561 VACo supports full state funding for the local costs associated with Medicaid  
562 expansion, including local eligibility workers and case managers. VACo supports  
563 restoration of General Fund reductions to Community Services Boards in FY  
564 2020. These savings were incorporated in the 2018 Appropriations Act and were  
565 expected to be generated by replacing General Fund support for services for  
566 previously-uninsured CSB clients with Medicaid billing for clients newly eligible  
567 for Medicaid. However, there is concern that Medicaid reimbursements may not  
568 fully cover the General Fund reductions.

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570 **Legislation with Local Fiscal Impact**

571 VACo supports legislation or other measures providing additional time for  
572 localities to review legislation that may have an impact on local revenues or  
573 expenditures.

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575 **Modernization of Communications Sales and Use Tax Structure**

576 VACo supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax (CSUT) to  
577 ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has  
578 evolved since the CSUT took effect in January 2007.

579 VACo opposes any further diversion of Communications Sales and Use Tax  
580 Trust Fund dollars beyond the uses already specified in statute. These revenues  
581 should be held in trust for localities and not diverted for general state purposes.  
582 Currently, funds from the Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust Fund are  
583 taken “off the top” for the Department of Taxation’s costs to administer the tax,  
584 the telephone relay center operated by the Department for the Deaf and Hard of  
585 Hearing, and any franchise fees owed to localities. Language adopted in the  
586 2018-2020 biennium budget provides for an additional diversion of funds to the  
587 state General Fund from assumed savings in the telephone relay contract; these  
588 funds would otherwise flow to localities.

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590 **Real and Personal Property Tax Exemptions Enacted Prior to 2003**

591 VACo supports providing localities the ability to decide whether to maintain  
592 property tax exemptions granted by the General Assembly prior to passage of the  
593 Constitutional amendment vesting the authority to grant such exemptions with  
594 localities. The Constitutional amendment which was passed by the voters in  
595 2002 and took effect in January 2003 placed decision-making authority about  
596 local tax exemptions with local governing bodies, within certain limits, and this  
597 authority should apply to exemptions granted before 2003 as well.

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# GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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## Priority

### **Unfunded Mandates**

VACo opposes unfunded mandates and shifting fiscal responsibility for existing programs by the Commonwealth from the state to localities. 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.

## Positions

### **Collective Bargaining for Public Employees**

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

### **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 printed 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. Additionally, VACo supports a streamlined process to address situations in which census boundaries do not align with locally drawn or commonly adhered to boundaries.

### **Ethics Reform**

VACo supports common sense efforts to strengthen Virginia's public ethics and conflicts of interest laws that 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 use an administrative hearing officer and existing grievance panels and procedures, and opposes the mandate 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.



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**Interoperability**

VACo supports the state’s goal that agencies and their representatives at the local, regional, state and federal levels 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.

**Local Authority**

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

**Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1)**

VACo supports the Commonwealth’s transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) in a way that does not unfairly burden localities, financially or otherwise.

**Pretrial Services**

VACo supports increased funding for and expansion of pretrial services.

**Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement**

VACo supports legislation to streamline required newspaper 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 of local governments to adopt policies and practices regarding body worn cameras that reflect local needs and fiscal realities.

**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.

# HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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## 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 provide full funding to localities and their state administrative entities 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 seniors 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 Healthcare**

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow Community Services Boards (CSBs) to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care. State support must adequately enable CSBs to provide the additional services mandated by the General Assembly to be phased in over the next several years, as well as any additional requirements that may be added, such as a requirement to provide behavioral health treatment in local and regional jails.

Any changes to CSB funding should involve meaningful consultation with localities as key funding partners in the behavioral health system. In addition to local contributions to CSBs, localities make significant commitments to behavioral health through support for services funded through the Children’s Services Act and local spending on behavioral health care in local and regional jails, among other funding commitments.

Proposed changes to the funding structure, such as the creation of new funding formulae, should apply only to new funding. As an alternative, hold-harmless funds must be provided to those CSBs that would stand to lose state funding under any new funding structure.

VACo supports the ability of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to waive local matching requirements for CSB funding for localities experiencing financial hardships.

Realignment of the behavioral health funding structure to incentivize community-based treatment rather than use of state hospitals will require additional state dollars and must not rely on local funding to backfill unanticipated costs for hospitalization.

736 VACo supports the creation of additional Medicaid waiver slots to serve  
737 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community,  
738 approximately 13,000 of whom were on a wait-list as of August 2019.  
739

### 740 **Children’s Services Act**

741 VACo supports equitable cost-sharing between the state and localities for the  
742 costs involved in the placements of children in residential treatment facilities for  
743 non-educational reasons. VACo opposes proposals to limit state participation in  
744 funding services for children and youth who are mandated to be provided with  
745 special education and foster care services.

746 VACo supports enhancing the ability of local school divisions to serve  
747 children with disabilities, to include flexibility in use of state pool funds to serve  
748 children with high-level needs in local or regional programs tailored to meet  
749 those needs, and additional support for special education wraparound services to  
750 help support children in their communities.

751 VACo supports state assistance to localities with contracting for CSA  
752 services to improve localities’ ability to negotiate with providers of these services,  
753 such as private day placements.  
754

### 755 **Early Intervention**

756 VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an  
757 entitlement program that provides services for Virginia’s infants and toddlers.  
758 VACo requests that the General Assembly continue to increase state general  
759 funding to address growth in caseloads. Underfunding this entitlement program  
760 puts pressure on local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.  
761

### 762 **Emergency Medical Transportation**

763 VACo supports policies to protect consumers who require air ambulance services.  
764 VACo opposes proposals that would add additional legal and administrative  
765 burdens on local first responders regarding decisions about methods of  
766 transportation in emergency situations.  
767

### 768 **Foster Care**

769 VACo supports efforts to ensure that the state is prepared to meet the  
770 requirements of the recently-enacted federal legislation governing federal  
771 funding for children placed in foster care, to include preparing providers to meet  
772 new standards required in the law. This legislation will allow federal  
773 participation in prevention services that previously have been funded by state  
774 and local dollars, but services must meet certain standards in order to qualify for  
775 federal funding. VACo supports state assistance in recruiting appropriate foster  
776 families to care for children who must be removed from their homes

777 VACo supports state assistance in recruiting and retaining child welfare  
778 workers to address high rates of turnover in local departments of social services.  
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**Group Homes**

VACo supports resources necessary for the state to enforce appropriate regulation of group homes, such as staff qualifications and the condition of the homes, to ensure the protection of residents’ health and safety.

**Healthcare**

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

**Human Trafficking**

VACo supports treating survivors of human trafficking as victims, not criminals, and supports their access to services available to other trauma victims, such as job placement services, housing assistance, access to education, legal services, and mental health services.

**Local EMS Involvement**

VACo supports increased local involvement in state EMS planning to ensure statewide needs are met and to avoid imposing unnecessary barriers to volunteerism.

**Prevention Services**

VACo supports increased state general funding for community-based service programs. VACo recognizes programs such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and Resource Mothers as important models and requests that the General Assembly provide additional funding for these home- and community-based activities. Investments in programs that ensure a strong start for children can help reduce the need for costlier interventions later in life.

**Substance Abuse**

Efforts to address substance dependency must be comprehensive and coordinated with localities. The state should develop and support evidence-based prevention initiatives and should continue to improve access to treatment.

**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. Flexibility in the delivery of these services is essential in meeting the needs of residents.

# TRANSPORTATION

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## Priority

### **Transportation Funding**

VACo supports expedited action to address the causes for declining growth in transportation revenues and to develop recommendations to grow revenue over time to meet increasing demands for new construction and maintenance for existing transportation infrastructure. Such action must address the secondary road needs of counties throughout the Commonwealth, as such funding has been vastly reduced over the past 10 years.

VACo supports changes to simplify the Smart Scale process for allocating transportation funds to reduce time and costs to prepare and review applications.

VACo supports adequate funding levels to maintain existing transit capital state match rates which are projected to decline starting in 2021 due to the depletion of transportation bonds.

In 2018 the legislature enacted a dedicated funding solution for Metro that came largely through reallocation of existing revenues, at the expense of other significant transportation projects throughout Northern Virginia. To address this issue, VACo supports continuing efforts to replace the regional funding that was redirected from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority.

## Positions

### **Local-State Cooperation**

VACo is committed to the protection of local government authority to regulate land use. This authority must be recognized by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) when evaluations are conducted to determine the consistency between local transportation plans and the Commonwealth's transportation priorities. VACo also opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the CTB's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance and the implementation of Arterial Preservation. Additionally, VACo supports additional flexibility within the VDOT project approval process and standards to be responsive to localities' individual needs. VACo supports the expansion of authority and discretion of Resident Administrators of VDOT to approve modifications to design standards where appropriate with local needs.

### **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.

### **Highway Tolls**

VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia's interstate highways until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and

875 assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has  
876 identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a  
877 proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding  
878 sources.

879

880 **Maintenance Priorities**

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

883

884 **Orphaned Drainage Outfalls**

885 VACo supports that VDOT and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
886 provide a report to the General Assembly on the scope of drainage outfalls with  
887 no assigned maintaining entity across the Commonwealth and recommend  
888 solutions that carry out existing statute.

889

890 **Parking**

891 VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating,  
892 including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on  
893 subdivision streets. In addition, VACo supports additional authority that would  
894 allow localities with parking ordinances the ability to enforce such ordinances  
895 using law enforcement, uniformed local employees, or uniformed personnel  
896 under contract with the locality.

897

898 **Peer-to-Peer Vehicle Rentals**

899 All Vehicles, regardless of ownership, that are rented through online platforms  
900 should be subject to the current rental car taxes allocated to state and local funds.

901

902 **Rail Enhancement Fund**

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

905

906 **Railway Crossings**

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

909

910 **Truck Size and Weight**

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

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