
—ALERT—

Capitol Contact

Monday, January 22, 2024

Capitol Contact ALERT

School Construction Financing Bill to be Heard Tomorrow – Call Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee Members to Support

[SB 14 \(McPike\)](#) would permit any county or city to impose an additional local sales and use tax of up to 1 percent, if initiated by a resolution of the local governing body and approved by voters at a local referendum. The revenues of such local tax would be used solely for capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools. Any tax imposed shall expire when the costs for capital projects are to be repaid and shall not be more than 20 years after the date of the resolution passed. Currently, this authority is limited to the qualifying localities of Charlotte, Gloucester, Halifax, Henry, Mecklenburg, Northampton, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties and the City of Danville. Eight of these localities have held and passed voter referendums. [SB 146 \(Ruff\)](#) would expand this authority to Prince Edward County and is also supported by VACo.

These bills allow Counties to exercise a local voter approved option to meet their community needs. They are NOT an automatic tax increase.

ACTION REQUIRED – Call your legislators who serve on the [Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee](#) now to encourage their support of these measures. Please let VACo know how your legislators respond to your request.

These bills will be heard tomorrow morning (January 23) at 9 a.m. in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. Please contact [Committee members](#) **TODAY** to urge them to support SB 14 and SB 146.

Please review this [video](#) and [one-pager](#) for information on the desperate need for more school construction financing options.

KEY POINTS

- Funding for school construction and renovation is one of the biggest concerns and responsibilities of local governments in the Commonwealth and has been almost solely a local responsibility for decades. The condition of the facilities in which children are educated has a direct impact on their ability to learn.
- Many localities face significant challenges in raising sufficient funds to undertake these projects. These challenges include over-reliance on real property taxes to generate revenue, which can have vastly different yields depending on the locality and disproportionately burden a subset of taxpayers within a jurisdiction. This raises concerns over equity and diversity of revenues.
- According to the [Commission on School Construction and Modernization](#), more than half of K-12 school buildings in Virginia are more than 50 years old. The amount of funding needed to replace these buildings is estimated to cost \$24.8 billion.
- This legislation was a unanimous recommendation by the Commission on School Construction and Modernization.
- This bill is about parity for local governments, giving all counties the same authority currently given to nine localities.
- This bill is **NOT** a tax increase. It would merely create a local option and another tool in the toolbox of local government, which would only be enacted by local referendum.

KEY CONTACTS

[SENATE FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS](#)

VACo Contact: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#)