

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

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Bill Preempting Local Authority on Siting Solar and Battery Storage Facilities Fails

In light of strong opposition from Virginia counties, a subcommittee of House Counties, Cities and Towns voted to carry over to the 2025 legislation session, [SB 697 \(VanValkenburg\)](#). At the request of the chair of the full committee, the [Commission on Electric Utility Regulation](#) will review the bill.

The legislation mandates that any local ordinance adopted pursuant [§ 15.2-2288.7](#) of the Code of Virginia (local regulation of solar facilities) shall not “... include limits on the total amount, density, or size of any ground mounted solar facility or energy facility unless the total panel area exceeds 4% of the total area within the county.”

VACo Members – Thank you for your advocacy.

VACo Contact: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)

School Construction Financing Bills Fly through Senate and House

[SB 14 \(McPike\)](#) and [HB 805 \(Rasoul\)](#) have passed their respective houses after crossover, and will soon advance to Governor Youngkin. On February 26, the House passed [SB 14 \(McPike\)](#) on a [68-28](#) vote, and on February 23, the Senate passed with a substitute, [HB 805 \(Rasoul\)](#), on a vote of [27-12](#).

As previously [reported](#), this legislation 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 a 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.

VACo and numerous other local government and K-12 advocates have testified in favor of the bills. VACo thanks its members and those who advocated for this important legislation.

Please contact your delegates and senators to thank them for their positive support. Also, please urge Governor Youngkin to sign this legislation into law.

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.

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

Call Now to Oppose Bill to Preempt Local Authority to Regulate Short-Term Rentals

[SB 544 \(Bagby\)](#) prohibits a locality from adopting a local ordinance that requires a special exception, special use, or conditional use permit be obtained for the use of a residential dwelling as a short-term rental where the dwelling unit is also legally occupied by the property owner as his or her primary residence.

SB 544 is expected to be heard on the House Floor this week.

ACTION REQUIRED – Call members of the [House of Delegates](#) (2-Part Email List – [Delegates 1](#) | [Delegates 2](#)) today to oppose SB 544.

KEY POINTS

- Local governments have the authority to regulate and address any potential impacts from the operation of short-term rentals within their community.
- Mandated changes to this authority erodes the ability of local elected officials to address impacts from their operation.

KEY CONTACTS

- [House of Delegates](#) (2-Part Email List – [Delegates 1](#) | [Delegates 2](#))

VACo Contact: [Joe Lerch, AICP](#)

Key Dates for the 2024 General Assembly

As part of its organizational work on the first day of the 2024 session, the General Assembly adopted a procedural resolution on January 10 that sets out important dates and deadlines for the 2024 legislative session.

- **January 10:** General Assembly convened at noon. Bills that were “prefiled” were due to be submitted by 10:00 a.m. Bills affecting the Virginia Retirement System, or creating or continuing a study, were required to be

filed by adjournment of the floor session.

- **January 12:** Deadline for submission of member budget amendments.
- **January 19:** Deadline for all bills or joint resolutions to be filed (by 3 p.m.), with some exceptions, such as legislation introduced at the request of the Governor or legislation allowed to be introduced after deadlines by unanimous consent.
- **February 13:** “Crossover” deadline for each chamber to complete work on legislation originating in that chamber (except for the budget bill).
- **February 18:** “Budget Sunday,” the deadline for the “money committees” to report their respective budgets by midnight.
- **February 22:** Deadline for each chamber to complete consideration of its budget bill.
- **February 28:** Deadline for each chamber to complete consideration of the other chamber’s budget bill and revenue bills.
- **March 4:** Deadline for committee consideration of legislation, by midnight.
- **March 9:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*.
- **April 17:** Reconvened session for consideration of Governor’s amendments and vetoes.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)