

VACo Opposes New Proposal to Preempt Local Decisions on Siting of Solar Facilities



On November 26, the [Commission on Electric Utility Regulation \(CEUR\)](#) was presented a draft legislative proposal, that if adopted, would signal the state's intention to override a decision by any county that denies certain applications for a utility-scale solar or battery storage project more than 20 megawatts (MW) in generation/storage capacity (NOTE: On average, a 20 MW solar facility occupies approximately 200 acres of land).

The specifics for preemption of local decisions include the following:

- Creation of the Virginia Solar Energy and Energy Storage Siting Advisory Board to provide an opinion as to whether a locality should approve any solar or battery storage project more than 20 MW in capacity and within 7 miles to an interconnection point (substation) to the electric grid.
- Beginning October 2025, the advisory board must issue a report and opinion within 90 days of the application to the locality, which must then decide to approve or deny the application within 30 days of receiving the opinion.

- If denied, a locality is required to “... demonstrate in reasonable terms why the application has been denied”.
- Within 21 days of receiving a denial from a locality, a developer may appeal the decision to the State Corporation Commission (SCC). Within 30 days of receiving the appeal, the SCC shall approve the project if it meets the thresholds for generation capacity and proximity to the electric grid.
- Beginning January of 2028, pending an SCC order of certain targets not being met, the advisory board becomes the approval body in place of local governments.

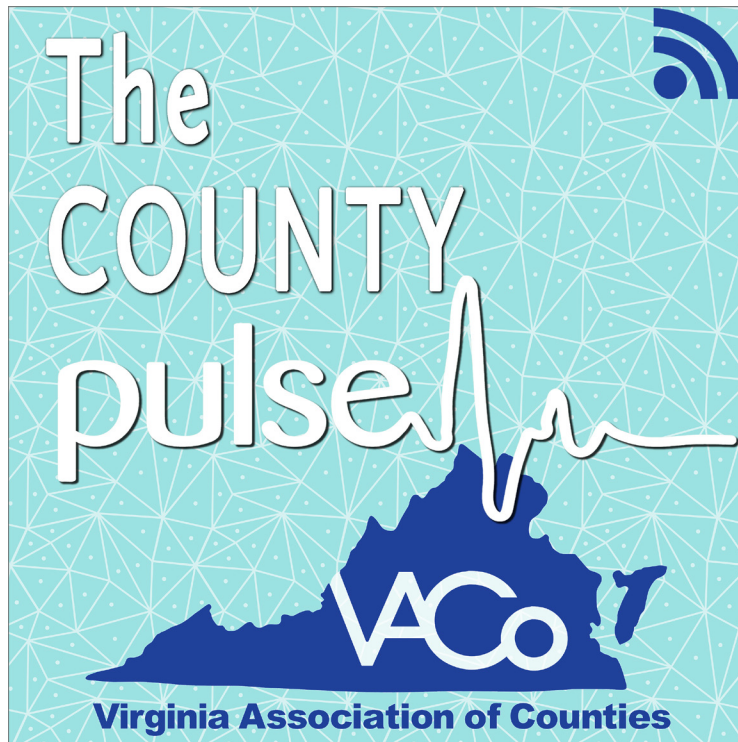
The proposal also includes a requirement that by July 1, 2026, all localities adopt model ordinances for the siting of solar and battery storage projects as defined by a yet to be determined state body.

Lastly, the proposal requires that by July 1 planning district commissions (PDCs) “...create regional energy plans which shall demonstrate a meaningful contribution to state energy goals and forecasted energy growth, consistent with long term zero carbon emissions requirements and clean energy development standards as set forth in the Virginia Clean Economy Act of 2020.” In order to achieve this deadline, there is a proposal for a separate budget amendment of \$4 million “... to invest resources into Planning District Commissions for the sole purpose of creating regional energy plans and advising localities on comprehensive energy plans.”

VACo supports state funding and technical assistance for developing local and regional energy plans to address production, transmission, and the deployment of resources to meet statewide greenhouse gas reduction goals. However, we oppose any legislation that would remove local authority over decisions regarding the siting of utility-scale solar, wind, and energy storage. VACo communicated these positions to CEUR’s “Permitting Committee” when it met on November 7.

The CEUR instructed staff to rework the proposal based on input from members and stakeholders and present it when it meets in January prior to the legislative session for consideration of endorsement by the Commission. VACo urges its members to contact their delegates and senators now in opposition to any proposal that limits or removes local decision-making authority for the siting of solar and battery storage facilities.

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



Season 4

Energy Landscape of Virginia Series with Joe Lerch

Energy Landscape of Virginia Episode 6 | Legislative Outlook Update - Proposals to Preempt County Authority on Siting of Solar Facilities



[Listen to the Podcast.](#)

Legislative Outlook Update - Proposals to Preempt County Authority on Siting of Solar Facilities

Joe Lerch and VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch provide an update on solar industry lobbying efforts to preempt local authority on siting of utility-scale facilities and what VACo and its members will be doing to ensure this does not happen.

Where to find out more about topics covered in this episode

- [Commission on Electric Utility Commission Meeting Page](#) (see 11/26/2024 and click "Materials" for drop down menu)
- [Proposed Legislative Outline for Facility Siting and Permitting](#)
- [CEUR November 26, 2024 meeting video](#)
- [UVA Virginia Solar Database](#)

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

January 23, 2025 | Omni Richmond Hotel



VACo COUNTY GOVERNMENT DAY

Thursday, January 23, 2025 | [Omni Richmond Hotel](#)

Virginia Association of Counties invites all County Supervisors to the County Government Day. This is the day when all counties come together and advocate on behalf of our communities. Join us for County Government Day at the General Assembly!

Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Reserve a Room: [Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link](#)

Who should attend: ALL County Supervisors and staff are encouraged to register and attend.

Registration Fee

- **\$100** | Includes Day Briefing (Noon – 2pm) and Reception (430 – 630pm)

Agenda

- **9am** | VACo Board of Directors Meeting
- **10am** | Registration
- **1130am** | Lunch
- **Noon** | VACo County Government Day
- **Afternoon** | Visit the Capitol to speak with legislators
- **430-630pm** | VACo Legislative Reception | Omni Richmond Hotel
Sponsored by Berkley Group

Please email Valerie Russell at vrussell@vaco.org with questions.

REGISTER TODAY!



Visit Prince William County and the Prince William County Historic Courthouse

The Old Manassas Courthouse is located at the intersection of Grant Avenue and Lee Avenue in Old Town Manassas. It is the fifth County Courthouse and County seat in Prince William County. The County seat was moved to Manassas in 1894 and this building was used as the County courthouse until 1982. The Old Manassas Courthouse was the site of the 1911 Peace Jubilee where President Taft stood on the grounds of the courthouse to kick off the week-long festivities. The 1911 Peace Jubilee marked the 50th anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas.

At the Old Manassas Courthouse stands a monument dedicated to the 1911 Jubilee of Peace. Flanking the plaque and two anchors are a pair of gun tubes, cannons, dating to the Civil War. In 2001, restoration and rehabilitation were completed and the Courthouse was reopened to the public. Upstairs visitors will find the original courtroom has been rehabilitated to an elegant ballroom, which the public can rent for meetings receptions and other special events.

For more information about booking the Old Manassas Courthouse for a meeting reception or special event call 703-792-5546 or email historicpreservation@pwcgov.org.

For more information on historic resources in the Prince William County area [click here](#).

SOURCE: [Prince William County](#)

SAVE THE DATES!

**VACo Supervisors Certification
Program (Budget Module)**

January to March 2025
VACo Headquarters

VACo County Government Day

Thursday, January 23, 2025
Omni Richmond Hotel

VACo Chairpersons' Institute

Friday and Saturday, January 24-25, 2025
Omni Richmond Hotel and
VACo Headquarters

Join us for these important events.

Call VACo at 804.788.6652 for more information



VIP Webinar: Join Us On 12/12!



Virginia Investment Pool

Thursday, December 12th at 2:00 PM

Join the VML/VACo Finance staff for our third webinar of 2024, where we will discuss the latest interest rate environment and its impact on the VIP investment pools.

We will also review the 2024 performance of both the VIP Liquidity Pool and the 1-3 Year High Quality Bond Fund and provide an overview of things to look out for in 2025.

CPE credit is available.

[Register Here](#)

WESTMORELAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ANNOUNCEMENT

At the Board meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors announced the hiring of James P. Taylor as the new County Administrator, effective December 1, 2024. Chairman Fisher stated, “we need to define where we go from here going forward we have great optimism and we believe we have made the best decisions that we could to put us and put the people we brought on to move us forward.” Taylor brings a wealth of experience working in local government, nonprofits, and the private sector. He most recently served as the Deputy County Administrator in Hanover County where he has spent the past 24 years.



Taylor stated, “I am deeply honored to be selected to serve as the new County Administrator of Westmoreland County. Thank you to the members of the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors for entrusting me with this important role for the community. I appreciate their thoughtful and deliberate process in making this selection. I look forward to working with our elected leaders, County staff, community partners, and residents to address the challenges and opportunities that face us. Citizen engagement and customer service will be among our top priorities. We will work hard to earn a high level of citizen trust through communication, service, and accountability.”

Prince George County Welcomes New Fire and EMS Chief



PRINCE GEORGE, Va. - Prince George County is proud to announce the appointment of Pedro J. Caceres as its new Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Chief. Chief Caceres will officially assume the position on January 16, 2025.

Caceres, who began his fire service career as a volunteer firefighter in 1994, brings an impressive 31-year career in public safety, most recently serving as Battalion Chief with the Wayne Township Fire Department in Indianapolis, Indiana. His extensive background includes multiple leadership roles and significant experience in emergency response and community service.

Chief Caceres has deployed to multiple disaster sites across the United States. He has a proven track record of strategic leadership, including developing department-wide training programs, implementing fitness initiatives, and leading strategic planning efforts.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to assume the position of Fire and EMS Chief of the Prince George County Fire Department," Caceres said. "I look forward to serving the members of the department and to leading a team committed to serving the community, and each other. I am ready to meet the challenges ahead and excited for the future."

A graduate of Ball State University with degrees in Architecture and Environmental Design, Caceres holds advanced credentials including an Executive Certificate in Public Leadership from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a Master of Public Management degree from Indiana University. He also holds the Executive Fire Officer designation from the National Fire Academy and has been a member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency Indiana Search and Rescue Task Force One for 22 years.

Chief Caceres will be relocating with his wife Samantha, whom he has been married to for over 30 years, along with their two beloved dogs: Emilia, a cattle dog, and Lily, a boxer.

Prince George County looks forward to Chief Caceres bringing his expertise and leadership to the community.

2025 VACo Chairpersons' Institute

Friday, January 24 & Saturday, January 25, 2025

[Omni Richmond Hotel](#) and VACo Headquarters

Virginia Association of Counties invites all County Chairs and Vice Chairs for specific training related to leading a County Board of Supervisors. The Chairpersons' Institute is newly designed to focus on duties and skills needed to be effective Chairs and Vice Chairs.

Dates: Friday, January 24 and Saturday, January 25

Reserve a Room: [Omni Richmond Hotel Room Link](#)

Who should attend: ALL County Chairs and Vice Chairs

Registration Fee

- \$350 | Includes Meals and Materials
- \$175 for Guest

Agenda (Coming Soon)

Friday

- **Early Morning** | Breakfast
- **9am** | Welcome and Introductions
- **9am-Noon** | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- **Noon** | Lunch
- **1pm-430pm** | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- **Evening** | Dinner with fellow Chairs and Vice Chairs

Saturday

- **Early Morning** | Breakfast
- **9am-1pm** | Collaborative and Peer-to-Peer Training
- **1pm** | Adjournment and Box Lunch to Go

Please email Valerie Russell at vrussell@vaco.org with questions.

And email Karie Walker at kwalker@vaco.org for sponsorship opportunities.



REGISTER TODAY!

The Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program



MODULE 1 – BUDGETING

January 31 – March 21

COST – \$450

INSTRUCTOR: [Jay A. Brown](#)

The VACo Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program begins with the Budgeting module, and we can't wait to share the experience with you. The 3-course program spans one year, so sign up now to be in The Class of 2025!

Open to all county supervisors, this exciting course comprises an opening class session, virtual cohort meetings, and a closing class session. As one of the three courses within VACo's Virginia Certified County Supervisors' Program, this course tackles the tough topic of county budgeting led by Class Manager Jay Brown. Don't miss this opportunity to build relationships with your fellow supervisors, learn from some of Virginia's most experienced local officials, and engage through meaningful discussions and learning materials.

Contact Karie Walker at kwalker@vaco.org with questions or for more information.

REGISTER TODAY!

“Money Committees” Prepare for 2025 at Annual Retreats



The General Assembly’s “money committees” received generally positive reports about state revenues, tempered with uncertainty about broader economic factors, at their annual pre-session retreats in late November. The House Appropriations and House Finance Committees met in Abingdon on November 19, and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee held its event in Harrisonburg on November 21-22. In keeping with tradition, both meetings featured briefings about economic conditions, staff revenue forecasts, and presentations about key issues affecting the state budget, such as K-12 enrollment, Medicaid, and infrastructure needs. Staff to both Committees presented revenue forecasts that project substantial increases in state General Fund revenues relative to the forecast embedded in the current biennium budget, which had assumed a mild recession in FY 2024 that did not materialize. However, both staff directors cautioned that preserving structural balance will be a key task for the legislature, as much of the additional revenue is expected to be one-time in nature, and strongly encouraged members to prioritize use of the additional revenues for one-time spending items rather than ongoing commitments.

House Appropriations Outlook

Staff noted that FY 2024 revenues exceeded the December 2023 forecast by \$1.72 billion (\$1.1 billion after accounting for the \$525 million in additional revenues that were assumed in FY 2024 as part of the budget negotiations in May), and that FY 2025 collections through October have continued to overperform the forecast, largely driven by individual income tax collections. Although staff expects some slowing in employment growth and consumer spending, a recession is not anticipated; based on the healthy performance of FY 2025 collections and resilience in key economic indicators, staff forecasts total General Fund (GF) growth of 4.5 percent in FY 2025, moderating to 1.8 percent in FY 2026. These forecast adjustments result in \$2.2 billion in additional GF resources above the forecast in FY 2025 and \$1.04 billion above the forecast in FY 2026. After factoring in FY 2024 uncommitted surplus revenues, unexpended appropriations, and other adjustments, staff projects \$2.6 billion in additional resources in FY 2025 and \$1 billion in FY 2026, for a total of \$3.6 billion over the biennium.

Staff presented a significant caveat to this relatively sunny forecast, writing, “We are entering an era of change, which brings uncertainty.” Forecast risks identified by staff include higher tariffs, federal spending changes, the timing of Federal Reserve adjustments to interest rates, geopolitical conflicts, and changes to immigration and energy policy.

Staff identified a total of \$839.1 million over the biennium in mandatory spending increases, notably in unexpected additional needs in the Medicaid program. In addition to growth in program spending attributable to policy actions by the legislature, Medicaid enrollment has not declined as much as projected after the expiration of the pandemic-era prohibition on disenrollment, which required some FY 2024 expenses to be shifted to FY 2025. Further adjustments may be required based on revenue estimates for the Virginia Health Care Fund (which is partially derived from tobacco taxes and used as a portion of the state's share of the program). Staff noted several long-term factors to be monitored, including enrollment and utilization trends, as well as potential changes to the program at the federal level. Staff also provided a list of high-priority spending items submitted by state agencies, as well as major policy issues that will likely require additional state investments, such as funding the recommendations of JLARC's 2023 report on K-12 funding and addressing child care subsidy waitlists. Although substantial resources are anticipated relative to revenue levels in the current budget, staff strongly encouraged members to focus on one-time investments to avoid creating a structural imbalance in future years, as most of the additional revenues will be generated in the first year and carried over as balances in FY 2026.

Senate Finance and Appropriations Outlook

Senate Finance and Appropriations staff pointed to similar economic indicators in depicting an economy that is stronger than projected in December 2023, albeit with job and wage growth moderating. Staff projects GF revenue growth of 3.7 percent in FY 2025 and 2.6 percent in FY 2026, for total GF revenues above the December 2023 forecast of \$2 billion in FY 2025 and \$991.8 million in FY 2026. When these resource adjustments are added to FY 2024 balances and unexpended appropriations, total GF resources above the current budget base are projected at \$2.4 billion in FY 2025 and \$991.8 million in FY 2026, for a total of \$3.4 billion over the biennium. Staff identified \$870.8 million in mandatory spending pressures over the biennium (including the unexpected Medicaid requirements discussed earlier), as well as a series of anticipated priority spending items, including bonuses or salary increases for state and state-supported local employees and teachers, as well as funding for JLARC's SOQ recommendations.

Similar to House Appropriations staff's notes of caution, Senate Finance and Appropriations staff listed a series of potential risks to the forecast, including monetary and fiscal policy at the federal level and geopolitical factors such as oil prices and tension with China. Staff strongly encouraged members to allocate the bulk of the additional GF resources that are anticipated in FY 2025 for one-time items and not to increase ongoing spending items beyond the \$289.3 million anticipated to be available in FY 2026 for these purposes (after accounting for spending levels in the existing budget and anticipated new mandatory spending), to avoid creating a structural imbalance in FY 2027.

Federal Tax Policy and Virginia's Budget

The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which was enacted in 2017, expires at the end of 2025; several expiring provisions that affect individual income taxes were adopted by Virginia and will need to be addressed by the General Assembly. House Appropriations staff suggested that the legislature might want to consider waiting until after Congress acts, which could require state action after the conclusion of the 2025 regular session. The Senate Finance and Appropriations meeting included a [presentation](#) by the Department of Taxation on the effects on Virginia of extensions of these policies, as well as the potential revenue effects of the legislature's action in 2023 to adopt rolling conformity of Virginia's income tax structure to federal tax changes, with certain guardrails. Marcia Howard, Executive Director and Executive Editor of Federal Funds Information for States, also discussed potential impacts to states of possible changes to federal spending (including potential reductions in federal Medicaid contributions) and the process by which spending reductions might be enacted.

Presentations on other topics of interest at the House Appropriations retreat (including Medicaid, behavioral health, economic development, and transportation) may be found at [this link](#). Senate Finance and Appropriations retreat materials (including presentations on K-12, public safety, health and human services, and infrastructure, among other topics) are posted at [this link](#).

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

Congressman Gerry Connolly speaks at the Region 8 Meeting

VACo held its last regional meeting for 2024 on September 26th in service of VACo Region 8 county members. VACo staff had the honor of hosting local, state and federal elected officials and staff during this virtual meeting. These regional meetings allow VACo staff to hear directly from county staff and elected officials on the important issues facing localities across Virginia.

It was an absolute pleasure to be able to have Congressman Gerry Connolly (VA-11) kick off the meeting. The Congressman, who is a past president of VACo, emphasized the importance of local government and the real impact localities have on the general welfare of citizens. VACo staff would like to give a special thanks to the Congressman for lending some of his time to meet with VACo members.

The meeting then shifted to a conversation with state legislators who represent the region. The legislators were asked to discuss their legislative priorities as we move toward the 2025 Session. Senator Barbara Favola began and discussed her areas of focus, which include education, data centers, housing, mental health support and childcare. Senator Dave Marsden discussed his work on clean energy issues with stakeholders during the interim. Delegate David Reid discussed his opposition to unfunded mandates and encouraged Delegates and Senators on the call to engage with localities before and after Sessions for insight into local problems. Delegate Rip Sullivan discussed his interest in last year's JLARC education funding report and how he is anticipating the JLARC study this year on data centers and what legislative recommendations that may come from this report. Delegate Vivian Watts discussed reworking and modernizing the state income tax, as well as other issues like education funding and childcare. Finally, Delegate Kathy Tran discussed proposals that focus on economic development, the environment and working families. We were also joined by Senator Saddam Salim and Delegate Atoosa Reaser and a variety of aides and staff to legislators.

After our discussion with legislators, representatives from each county outlined their top issues or legislative priorities within their localities. Issues such as transportation funding, land use authority, mental health and education funding were common topics of discussion. On transportation, counties discussed the challenges they face with high-cost projects and funding decisions related to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Counties are closely tracking the [Northern Virginia Growing Needs of Public Transit Joint Subcommittee](#) that came about after the passage of [SJR 28](#) during the 2024 Session. VACo is also tracking this Subcommittee and its recommendations, which are due by the end of 2025. Local land use authority was discussed and how decisions regarding data centers, preserving tree canopy, housing and many other types of land use should remain at the local level. Mental health and education funding were discussed as localities support further state resources to these issue areas.

VACo staff would like to give a special thanks to the VACo members, legislators, partners, and others who attended and participated in the discussion. This meeting concludes the VACo regional meeting calendar for the year and all of us at VACo want to say thank you to all those who hosted, spoke at and participated in these meetings over the last few months. We are looking forward to visiting counties and discussing the issues important to county leaders in 2025.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

PFAS Expert Advisory Committee Begins Meeting



On November 8, 2024 the first meeting of the PFAS Expert Advisory Committee took place. [Legislation passed](#) during the 2024 Session required the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to transfer data to the Virginia Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) on a quarterly basis all validated monitoring test results that indicate Per and Polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) [Maximum Contaminate Level \(MCL\)](#) exceedances. DEQ is then required to develop and implement a plan to prioritize and conduct PFAS assessments to identify significant sources of PFAS in the raw water for those public water systems. Other provisions of this law establish requirements for monitoring and self-reporting of PFAS from certain discharges.

The legislation also directs DEQ to establish the PFAS Expert Advisory Committee, which will assist DEQ and VDH in developing solutions to reduce and eliminate the discharge of PFAS. The enacted legislation requires DEQ to annually report by October 1 on activities related to PFAS assessments, self-reporting, and discharge monitoring to the Governor and the General Assembly. The [first annual report](#) was released in October 2024 and shares some important steps various agencies have taken toward addressing PFAS since the new legislation became effective and a history of past actions agencies have taken to address PFAS.

Highlights of the Report include:

- Staffing for DEQ PFAS-related positions is underway and almost complete
- The PFAS Expert Advisory Committee members have been appointed by the DEQ Director (List of members on Page 12 and 13 of [Report](#))
- Initial monitoring data conducted or reported by VDH was transferred to DEQ on July 1, 2024
- Two meetings of the Committee have been scheduled for 2024
- DEQ has conferred with VDH on the data for drinking water systems with PFAS maximum contaminant level exceedances and is on track to issue notices to applicable facilities that may be required to implement monitoring and or self-reporting for PFAS by the December 1, 2024 deadline in the third enactment clause of the legislation.

VACo will continue to track and provide updates on the work undertaken by the PFAS Expert Advisory Committee and the relevant state agencies.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service Urges Virginians to Prepare During Winter Weather Awareness Week

RICHMOND – As winter approaches, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) encourages Virginians to prepare for the potential impacts of winter weather during **Winter Weather Awareness Week**, observed from **December 2 – 6, 2024**. In partnership with the National Weather Service (NWS), VDEM is dedicated to raising awareness and ensuring communities across the commonwealth are equipped to handle winter's challenges.

Each year, winter weather can bring a range of hazards, including snow, sleet, freezing rain, and dangerously cold temperatures. These conditions increase the risk of hazardous travel, power outages, and health impacts, especially for vulnerable populations.

"Winter weather can disrupt daily life and create dangerous situations if we're not adequately prepared," said **VDEM State Coordinator Shawn Talmadge**. "We're urging all Virginians to use Winter Weather Awareness Week to take simple steps that can protect their loved ones and communities during severe winter weather."

Key Steps for Winter Weather Preparedness

1. **Build an Emergency Kit:** Include winter-specific items like blankets, warm clothing, rock salt or sand, and tools for removing snow. Ensure your kit has enough supplies for at least 72 hours.
2. **Prepare Your Home:** Winterize your home by insulating pipes, caulking windows, and making sure your heating system is working efficiently. If you rely on space heaters, use them safely and keep them away from flammable materials.
3. **Make a Plan:** Discuss with family members and neighbors about what you would do in the event of a winter storm or power outage. Ensure everyone knows how to stay warm and connected.
4. **Stay Informed:** Follow VDEM and the NWS for updates and consider signing up for local emergency alerts. Monitoring weather forecasts will allow you to act quickly when conditions worsen.
5. **Be Cautious on the Roads:** Plan to stay off the roads during severe weather if possible. If travel is necessary, ensure your vehicle is equipped with an emergency kit, check your tires, and drive carefully on ice and snow.
6. **Power Outage Preparedness:** Winter weather can lead to power outages that affect homes, heating systems, and communications. Prepare by having backup power sources and know how to use them safely. Always keep a flashlight, batteries, and a charged phone available.

"As we head into winter, it is important to be prepared for winter's impacts from not only snow and ice, but also from extreme cold as well," said **NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist Eric Seymour**. "Taking time now to prepare for these weather hazards will allow the impact on our lives to be reduced. From having the proper equipment for travelling in winter weather to properly using alternative heat sources, should the power go out, are things that can be done in advance to make sure the impacts from winter weather can be limited."

VDEM and NWS will share winter weather preparedness information throughout the week via the [web](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Each day will focus on a different [topic](#). Partner organizations and the media are encouraged to participate.

For more information on how to prepare for winter weather's hazards, visit [weather.gov/wakefield/winterweatherawarenessweek](https://www.weather.gov/wakefield/winterweatherawarenessweek). For winter weather safety information, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/4d2bprp9>.

Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority Free Webinar on Mobile Healthcare Services



Many cities and counties in Virginia are considering options to provide or expand mobile healthcare services that include a focus on connecting people with treatment for substance use disorders and associated health risks. On December 12, the OAA will host a special Abatement Academy session highlighting exactly how one community in Virginia has successfully launched exactly that kind of program.

Piedmont Community Services serves the counties of Franklin, Henry, and Patrick as well as the City of Martinsville. In cooperation with these jurisdictions Piedmont received funding from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to purchase a custom-made mobile health vehicle (pictured below) that provides mobile services to residents across the region.

Learn from Ms. Monica Flora, Piedmont's mobile MAT program manager, the details of how this program works. She will describe the history of the project, how it works, staffing, budget, and lessons learned.

To register for this FREE live Abatement Academy webinar, click on this [link](#).

Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



Congratulations Lancaster County!

Congratulations Lancaster County for winning its second
Achievement Award and first since 2016!

Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



Congratulations Sussex County!

Congratulations Sussex County for winning an Achievement Award! Sussex County turned a closed sanitary landfill into a walking trail and dog play area. The walking trail is adjacent to the county's animal shelter and has resulted in a successful "Walk the Shelter" monthly event.

Congratulations!

We love presenting Achievement Awards
at Board of Supervisors Meetings



Congratulations Prince William County!

Each year, the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) recognizes the most impactful programs across the state, and this year, two Prince William County initiatives earned top honors.

The Historic Thoroughfare Exhibit was celebrated for preserving the legacy of an African American community formed after the Civil War, offering a virtual space where oral histories, historic maps, and family stories come to life.

The Firefighter Cadet Program was awarded for empowering local youth with the training and certifications needed to start careers in public safety, with two recent graduates now serving the community.

These awards underscore how Prince William County is leading the way in both historical preservation and youth career development.

Learn more about the impact of these award-winning initiatives: <https://loom.ly/y0JVioY>



VACo Releases Its 2025 Legislative Program



VACo has released its [2025 Legislative Program](#), which was adopted by membership on November 12 at the Annual Business Meeting. The 2025 Legislative Program was drafted through VACo's steering committee process. The document has a host of important and timely proposed policy statements, including language pertaining to K-12 education funding, local taxing authority, stormwater regulations, land use planning, transportation, broadband, health and human resources and other local budget and legislative issues.

Click on the link to read the [2025 Legislative Program](#).

VACo's eight steering committees finalized and adopted their policy sections on November 10. The Resolutions Committee ratified the Legislative Program on November 11. VACo's membership voted to adopt the final Legislative Program on November 12.

For questions regarding VACo's legislative process, contact Dean Lynch at dlynch@vaco.org or 804.343.2511.

VACo Contact: [Dean Lynch, CAE](#)



Get your VA250 license plates - now available

Are you ready to show your pride in America's 250th anniversary? The VA250 commemorative license plate is now available for purchase! As a symbol of our nation's rich history and bright future, this limited-edition license plate offers a unique opportunity to drive with a piece of history.

By purchasing a VA250 license plate, you're not only adding a stylish touch to your vehicle, but you're also supporting a worthy cause. A portion of the proceeds from each plate sold will be donated directly to VA250, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating educational programs, events, and exhibits to commemorate America's 250th anniversary.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to own a piece of history and support a great cause. [Visit the Virginia DMV website](#) to purchase your VA250 license plate today.

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Donna Pierce, Client Relations
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Thank you Wythe County Chief Deputy [Anthony Cline](#) for sharing your experience with Blue Line Solutions!



Thank you Sussex County Sheriff [Ernest Giles](#) for sharing your experience with Blue Line Solutions!

Premier Partner Spotlight

Blue Line Solutions Testimonials

Blue Line Solutions is making a positive impact on communities all over Virginia. In Smyth County - **Blue Line Solutions** recorded during a five-day period that there were 3,530 vehicles traveling through school speed zones at 10mph or higher above the speed limit. That's over 12,000 speeding vehicles a month during school days.

Blue Line Solutions uses information and communications rather than focus on enforcement to reduce speeds in school zones.

During **Blue Line Solutions** Public Information Phase of its program in Smyth County - the number dropped to 213 over a five-day period. That's without writing one ticket. The community heard the problem and reacted to it. During the warning phase - the number dropped to 175. Then during the enforcement phase - it dropped to 72. That's a 98 percent reduction of speeders compared to before the **Blue Line Solutions** program.

"That's absolutely fantastic that we can make a difference in a community," Blue Line Solutions CEO/Founder Mark Hutchinson said.



Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing is a great tool to make your locality's and school division's budget go further!

Contact us for details.

VML/VACo Equipment Lease-Purchase Financing offers:

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- Predictable and level payments.
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- Streamlined process – we handle the details for you.

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CONTACT US TODAY

Questions?

Contact Steve Mulroy
804-648-0635

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Berkley Group is the go-to consultant for local governments and other public agencies. 100% of our services are dedicated to serving public agencies. We understand local government because we have worked in local government and continue to serve them proudly.

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VACo Seeks to Create Mentorship Program for Supervisors



Dear Members/County Administrators...

VACo is blessed to have many smart and experienced Supervisors. This year we welcomed a slew of newly elected Supervisors, some of whom have expressed interest in being mentored. VACo thrives when Supervisors connect and share experiences and challenges. Therefore, we would like to establish an informal, voluntary mentoring program to offer opportunities for personalized connections among Supervisors.

If you are interested in being a mentor or being connected with a mentor, please contact Karie Walker, kwalker@vaco.org or 804-343-2504.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Karie Walker
Director of Programs and Development
Virginia Association of Counties



You are VAcorp

You are not merely a customer of VAcorp; you **are** VAcorp! We are both owned and governed by you – our members! VAcorp is created under 15.2-2700 of the local government code where all assets and surplus belong to the members. In addition, VAcorp is controlled by a Supervisory Board that is elected from and by our members. The Board determines and approves all major risk pool decisions, and as a voting member, you have a voice in the decisions that matter most.

Know Who You Are

Because you are VAcorp itself, we think it is critical that you understand exactly what VAcorp is and why it exists. Many simply think of us as their “insurance carrier” – writing customized coverages and handling claims when they occur – but we are so much more!

Our History

The Birth of Risk Pools

VAcorp is not an insurance company, but rather a Risk Pool.

Unstable economic conditions in the mid-1980s led to a commercial insurance crisis with ballooning premiums and widespread policy cancellations. As a result, Risk Pools began to form as an alternative to volatile traditional carriers, allowing Pool members to exert more control over their coverages and costs. Today, almost all public sector entities throughout the country get their coverage from Risk Pools rather than from commercial insurance companies.

VAcorp’s Origin

VAcorp was founded by a handful of Virginia counties in 1993. The ultimate goals of the program were to provide **cost stability**, the most **comprehensive coverages** possible, and **custom services** tailored specifically to the unique needs of our members. While we are pleased by how well our prices compare against the competition, our goal was never to guarantee the lowest cost. Instead, we promised to avoid the wild price swings that we’ve seen in other providers and provide stable pricing year after year, and that is exactly what we have delivered. VAcorp rates are actually **lower today in 2024 than they were in 1993!**

VAcorp’s Growth

Today, VAcorp is the **largest self-insurance risk pool** for public sector entities in the Commonwealth with a membership retention rate of better than 98%. Over the years, we have expanded beyond counties to include municipalities, school divisions, authorities, volunteer fire & rescue companies, state agencies, and non-profits funded by taxpayer dollars. **Over 560 members** have joined VAcorp, including 8 of the 10 largest counties, 8 of the 10 largest cities, and 8 of the 10 largest school divisions. We believe that the extraordinary success of the program can be attributed to our unwavering commitment to our founding principles.

VAcorp Exists to Serve You

VAcorp was created solely to serve Virginia's public sector entities, and from day one until now, we have never lost sight of that purpose. Because we answer only to our members, every decision is designed to benefit the group over the long haul.

VAcorp advocates for local government through a myriad of partnerships with affiliated associations including: VACo, VSBA, VLGMA, VASS, VFGOA, VASBO, LGA, Regional Jail Association, PDC, etc. While there is a cost associated with these partnerships, they add value to the group by aiding in our ability to lobby the General Assembly on behalf of our members.

You may not always see the immediate payoff, but every VAcorp decision is made in alignment with our vision to serve our members and promote the health and longevity of your program.

Take a look at a few of VAcorp's milestones over the years:

- **1993** - VAcorp is established with 12 founding members and less than \$700,000 in annual contribution.
- **1998** - VAcorp terminates service contract with claims administration vendor and hires staff to promote more control and efficiency.
- **1999** - VAcorp offers coverage to K-12 Public Schools across the Commonwealth.
- **2001** - VAcorp begins offering Public Officials Liability coverage in response to VARisk offering limited coverage.
- **2004** - VAcorp begins providing Environmental Liability coverage to all members at no additional cost. Even in 2024, VAcorp is the only provider offering this coverage with a low \$25,000 deductible. Other providers offer this coverage with a \$250,000 deductible.
- **2008** - VAcorp responded to the great recession by freezing rates and providing financial relief with over \$8,000,000 in dividends to members.
- **2011** - VAcorp introduces Line of Duty Act (LODA) coverage, creates the only LODA trust in the state, and absorbs existing LODA losses in response to the state pushing this cost to the local level. VAcorp paid all of its members' 2010 past liability for over \$1,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp merges with the VSBA Self-Insurance Group and assumes their liabilities to prevent School Boards from being assessed. This action saves Local Governments in excess of \$5,000,000.
- **2013** - VAcorp becomes the first to offer Cyber Risk coverage in Virginia offering the broadest coverage available to local governments anywhere in the US.
- **2016** - VAcorp offers Student Accident and Catastrophic Accident coverage in order to fill VHSL coverage gaps.
- **2020** - VAcorp provides over \$5,000,000 in rate credits during the COVID pandemic to assist members.
- **2023** - VAcorp includes security risk management coverage (active shooter) for all members (coverage has been included for Schools since 2013).





OneDigital is thrilled to be one of VACo's newest Premier Partners.

What truly distinguishes OneDigital as a leading **insurance, financial services, and HR consulting advisory firm** is our holistic approach to creating environments that enable people to do their best work and live their best lives. OneDigital understands that counties face rising insurance costs while still struggling to attract/retain talent. This is why we use proprietary software to provide accurate and predictable insurance consulting projections for those core benefits that impact your bottom line and incorporate solutions to improve retention. While voluntary benefits may be the focus of other providers, OneDigital has the expertise in alternative funding strategies, best-in-class analytics, and an in-house actuarial team.

OneDigital has a track record of providing cost-saving solutions to counties. This has been achieved through creative funding strategies, rate holds, and exclusive partnerships with various carriers. One of these exclusive partnerships is through VACORP and Anthem Life. OneDigital is responsible for the inception of the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) which is through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). Our team of fierce advocates negotiated a 5-year locked rate, including short-term and long-term disability benefits. Your division may already work with us in this capacity, as we currently serve over 270 public sector entities in the VLDP program.



OUR SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

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- Development & Training

SUPPORT

- Benefits & Compensation
- Total Wellbeing
- Productivity
- Retirement Readiness

ENGAGE

- Culture
- Education & Fiduciary
- Literacy
- Communications

PROTECT

- Compliance
- Workplace Safety
- Operational Continuity
- Cyber Security



Sarah Anne Struckmann
Business Development Executive
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The Virginia Association of Counties accepts employment ads in a PDF file or a link to a job site. Please include information for applying, and a link to other important information. Please do not fax your employment ad. VACo members are not charged for placing an employment ad. **The cost is \$100 per ad for non-VACo members.** VACo publishes the ad on its website and mobile app as well as the upcoming County Connections issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please email Valerie.Russell.

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VALUE OF VACo



ADVOCACY

VACo's lobbying efforts have helped stem the tide of unfunded mandates and have saved Counties millions of dollars every year.



EDUCATION

Our educational programs offer County leaders and staff opportunities to become more effective in their communities.



MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Some of VACo's best moments are when members convene and work to improve communities all over the Commonwealth.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Our business development opportunities offer savings and innovative approaches to delivering services at the County level.

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VACo exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

1207 East Main Street | Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219-3627
Phone: 804.788.6652 | www.vaco.org

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