

Capitol Contact

Virginia General Assembly

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Thursday, February 20, 2025

FOIA Fees Legislation Falts

On February 19, the House of Delegates rereferred [SB 1029 \(Roem\)](#) back to the House General Laws Committee on a voice vote, effectively ending the bill's journey for the year. As previously [reported](#), this legislation is a revised version of past bills introduced by the patron and opposed by VACo to provide free or reduced requester fees for FOIA requests to public bodies. The introduced version of SB 1029 is based on a workgroup of stakeholders that held several meetings over the past year under the umbrella of the Freedom of Information Act Advisory Council. The Council did not take a position on the bill as it lacked a quorum at its last meeting before the session. The bill limits the fees that can be charged for producing public records to the median hourly rate of pay of employees of the public body, or the actual hourly rate of pay of the person performing the work, whichever is less. It also provides that a public body may petition a court for relief from this fee limit, if there is no one who can process the request at the median hourly rate of pay or less.

The bill also amends existing law providing that a public body may petition a court for additional time to respond to a request for public records to allow such petitions to be heard in either general district or circuit court, to give such petitions priority on the court's docket, and to toll the response time while such a petition is pending before a court. As part of the [workgroup](#), the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory (FOIA) Council staff has published best practices guides pertaining to access to public records under FOIA, FOIA charges, and making requests for public records.

VACo Contacts: [Jeremy R. Bennett](#) and [Phyllis Errico, Esq., CAE](#)

Energy Landscape of Virginia Episode 8 | Virginia General Assembly Update – Legislation on Data Centers and Utility-Scale Solar



[Listen to the Podcast](#)

Virginia General Assembly Update – Legislation on Data Centers and Utility-Scale Solar. Joe Lerch and VACo Executive Director Dean Lynch provide an update on the status of legislation relating to Data Centers and Utility-Scale Solar.

Where to find out more about topics covered in this episode

- [JLARC “Data Centers in Virginia” Report](#)
- [HB 1601/SB 1449](#) – Siting of Data Centers; Site Assessment
- [House Budget Amendment](#) – Extends the sunset date for sales tax exemption for data centers from 2035 to 2050
- [Senate Budget Amendment](#) – Requires data center operators to meet energy efficiency standards to qualify for sales tax exemption
- [Capitol Contact ALERT: VACo Opposes Bill Mandating Targets for Utility-Scale Solar in Comprehensive Plans](#)
- [Bills to Mandate Counties put State Targets for Utility-Scale Solar in Comprehensive Plans Fail](#)

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

General Assembly Convenes, Adopts Schedule for 2025 General Assembly Session

Key dates for the 2025 session, as approved by the General Assembly in its procedural resolution, are as follows:

- **Wednesday, January 8:** General Assembly convenes. Last day to introduce legislation creating or continuing a study, or legislation regarding the Virginia Retirement System
- **Friday, January 10:** Deadline for Senate budget amendments
- **Monday, January 13:** Governor’s State of the Commonwealth Address; last day to pre-file legislation (by 10 a.m.); deadline to submit House budget amendments
- **Friday, January 17:** Last day to file bills, except for bills offered by unanimous consent or bills submitted on behalf of the Governor
- **Sunday, February 2:** “Budget Sunday” deadline for House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees to report their respective budgets by midnight
- **Tuesday, February 4:** “Crossover” deadline for each chamber to complete work on legislation originating in that chamber (except the budget bill)
- **Thursday, February 6:** Deadline for each chamber to complete work on its budget bill
- **Wednesday, February 12:** Deadline for each chamber to complete consideration of the other chamber’s budget bill and revenue bills
- **Monday, February 17:** Deadline for committee action on legislation by midnight
- **Saturday, February 22:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*
- **Wednesday, April 2:** Reconvened session for consideration of Governor’s amendments and vetoes

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