



Tuesday, February 10, 2026

ACTION ITEM: Bill to Allow “By-Right” Multi-Family Housing Within One-Quarter Mile of Rail and Transit Stops Passes Senate

By a [vote 21-19](#), the Senate passed [SB 717 \(Salim\)](#) that would mandate localities to adopt “transit-oriented housing overlay districts” within one mile of major transit stops and transit corridors and that within such districts allow for by-right development of dwelling units at specified minimum densities. Specifically, the legislation requires localities to allow for (1) development of 30 units per acre - at a minimum six stories in height – within one-quarter of a mile of major transit stops; and (2) two units per lot and four units per corner lot between one-quarter of a mile and one mile of such a stop.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Contact your [Delegate](#) now to vote “NO” on SB 717.
- The legislation will now be considered in the [House Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee](#).

As specified in the legislation “major transit stop” is defined as ... *a station or stop served by heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, or other high-capacity transit service designated by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation*. This broad definition includes [Virginia Amtrak stations](#), [Virginia Railway Express \(VRE\) stations](#), as well as local and regional light rail and bus rapid transit stops such as [DC Metro stations](#) and [GRTC Pulse stops](#). A “transit corridor” is defined as ... *a segment of track or dedicated busway providing such transit service*.

KEY POINTS

- Counties have carefully planned for integrating housing, business, and jobs within major transit stops and corridors, often through significant investments in public infrastructure.
- Mandating “by-right” construction of housing at densities of up to 30 units per acre in such transit areas ignores the time and investment of localities in crafting land use plans to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders in developing vibrant mixed-use communities.

KEY CONTACTS

- [House Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee](#)

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

ACTION ITEM: Oppose Ban on the Land Application of Biosolids

[SB 386 \(Stuart\)](#) would prohibit any person, who holds a valid permit to distribute, or land apply sewage sludge, from distributing or land applying sewage sludge that contains **any trace amount** of PFAS. Because trace amounts of PFAS are ubiquitous in the global environment, this bill would effectively ban the application of biosolids on land in Virginia.

KEY POINTS

- There are three primary ways biosolids can be disposed of, being used as a fertilizer through land application, landfilling or incineration. Since the bill would ban the practice of land application, biosolids generating facilities (Wastewater plants) would either have to incinerate this material or find a landfill willing to accept it.
- The bill would create logistical challenges in finding landfills willing to accept the large amount of material that would need to be disposed of as well as costs associated with landfilling biosolids, including tipping fees, would rise due to the demand.
- Biosolids incineration in Virginia is difficult because existing capacity is low, and building new facilities is both expensive and time-consuming.

As passive receivers of PFAS chemicals in the waste stream, **VACo opposes SB 386** as the consequences of the bill would have a large fiscal impact on localities and their wastewater systems.

VACo Contact: [James Hutzler](#)

Bills Requiring Local Responsibility for Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Programs Need More Work

[HB 862 \(Cousins\)](#) and [SB 391 \(Stuart\)](#) are bills introduced at the recommendation of the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program Commission (VASAP), a legislative branch commission. The bills stem from a small working group of VASAP Commission members that met last fall and did not include local government representation. Significantly, as introduced, the bills would require localities to provide financial support for local alcohol safety action programs and require each local alcohol safety action program to have a locality serve as its fiscal agent; these are broad changes to the program that were not previously discussed with local governments. Some local governments have chosen to contribute to their local Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP), and some localities serve as fiscal agents for local ASAPs on a voluntary basis, but these are not requirements.

The bills also codify some regulations, reorganize certain Code sections, and set out responsibilities for local policy boards that supervise local alcohol safety action programs.

VACo is advocating that the provisions of the bills that impose these new responsibilities on localities be converted to study directives. A working group, as proposed by VACo, would provide an opportunity to consider how the program could be bolstered. VASAP's funding structure has been stressed for some time. The state created VASAP in the mid-1980s as a program supported by fees paid by individuals referred by the courts to the program. Fees have not increased in years and judges at times waive fees for individuals they deem unable to pay. Legislation in 2024 seeking to increase program fees failed to make it through the General Assembly. No state General Funds currently support the program.

HB 862 was amended in House Courts Criminal Subcommittee on Friday afternoon to delay the requirement for a local ASAP to designate a fiscal agent locality until January 1, 2028, and to include workgroup language proposed by VACo and VML that would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, in consultation with the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Transportation, to convene a work group to review the sustainability of the structure and funding model for VASAP. While the bill has been improved from its introduced version, it retains the requirement

for each locality that has established or participates in a local ASAP to provide financial support for the program. HB 862 will be in the full House Courts Committee on Wednesday afternoon, February 11.

SB 391 will be heard in the Senate Courts Committee on Wednesday and VACo is awaiting word on whether our proposed amendments will be offered.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)

VACo Supports Legislation that Provides Greater Flexibility for Use of At-Risk Add-On Funding

[HB 195 \(McQuinn\)](#) and [SB 33 \(Favola\)](#) would include as covered programs that are eligible for funding under the At-Risk [Program](#) initiatives to support both the physical and mental health of students in public schools, including the hiring of registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and licensed practical nurses. The bills are a recommendation of the School Health Services Committee. The legislation would provide additional flexibility for use of state funds to local school divisions for the provision of services to at-risk students.

HB 195 reported on February 9 from the House Appropriations Committee unanimously on a vote of 22-0. SB 33 reported on February 10 from the Senate Finance Appropriations Committee unanimously on a vote of 15-0. VACo testified in support of both bills.

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

Key Dates for 2026 General Assembly Session

The General Assembly convenes today for a scheduled 60-day session.

Key dates for the 2026 session, as approved by the Joint Rules Committee in the procedural resolution setting out the schedule for the session, are as follows:

- **Wednesday, January 14:** General Assembly convenes; pre-filed bills must be submitted by 10:00 a.m. (after the prefiling deadline, legislators are limited to five additional bills or resolutions). Last day to submit bills creating or continuing a study or to submit bills dealing with the Virginia Retirement System. Governor Youngkin will address a joint session of the General Assembly at 7 p.m.

- **Friday, January 16:** Deadline to submit budget amendments.
- **Saturday, January 17:** Inauguration of Governor-Elect Spanberger, Lieutenant Governor-Elect Hashmi, and Attorney General-Elect Jones.
- **Monday, January 19:** Joint session of the General Assembly for remarks by Governor Spanberger.
- **Friday, January 23:** Last day to submit legislation, other than bills submitted by unanimous consent or bills requested by the Governor.
- **Tuesday, February 17:** Last day for bills to be acted upon in their chambers of origin, other than the budget bills. Bills must “cross over” to the opposite chamber by Wednesday, February 18.
- **Sunday, February 22:** “Budget Sunday” deadline for House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations committees to report their respective budget proposals.
- **Thursday, February 26:** Deadline for each chamber to act on its respective budget proposal.
- **Wednesday, March 4:** Deadline for each chamber to act on budget and revenue bills from the other chamber and appoint conferees as necessary.
- **Monday, March 9:** Deadline for committee action on all legislation by midnight.
- **Saturday, March 14:** Scheduled adjournment *sine die*.
- **Wednesday, April 22:** Reconvened session to consider Governor’s actions on bills and budget items.

VACo Contact: [Katie Boyle](#)