

TO: Cindy Mester, Deputy City Manager
DATE: November 22nd, 2022
FROM: Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC)
SUBJECT: 2023 Legislative Agenda – Environmental Sustainability

The Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC) requests that the City of Falls Church include in its 2023 Legislative Program the following items related to environmental protection and conservation. These legislative actions, which support the City's own climate and energy plans, most urgently need to be addressed in this year's legislative session.

1. The City supports efforts to **protect** Virginia's participation in the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)**, the **Virginia Clean Economy Act**, and other legislation which has made advances in the areas of combatting climate change, promoting energy efficiency and electric vehicles, and encouraging clean energy investment.
2. The City supports legislation in **increase energy efficiency in existing buildings** including:
 - a. Legislation to allow localities to require private building owners to **benchmark energy and water usage** and report this information to their local jurisdiction annually for public disclosure;
 - b. Legislation to expand current authority for localities to allow for regional **clean energy financing authorities** that promote or incentivize investment in clean energy technologies; and
 - c. Legislation to support innovative **energy efficiency incentive and finance programs** for residential dwellings, including condominiums.
3. The City supports legislation to reform the process of updating the Virginia Energy Conservation Code, including requiring the State **to adopt the International Energy Conservation Code** promptly when a new iteration is adopted by the International Code Council **without weakening amendments**.
4. Support legislation to provide local governments with greater **incentives for the reforestation, preservation, and management of urban forests** in recognition of their ability to capture and store carbon, reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, reduce energy use, and mitigate urban heat islands and their health effects.
5. The City supports legislation to **encourage and achieve zero carbon energy** in the Commonwealth, including:
 - a. Legislation to **increase the Virginia Clean Energy Act's Renewable Portfolio Standard targets** to 60% by 2030, and 100% carbon-free electricity (renewables and nuclear) by 2035; and
 - b. Legislation placing a **moratorium** on the building of any **new fossil fuel infrastructure** in the Commonwealth.

6. The City supports legislation to **mitigate greenhouse gas emission impacts of the transportation sector**, including:
 - a. **Protect existing transit programs**, including dedicated funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (**WMATA**) and Virginia Railway Express (**VRE**);
 - b. Legislation and appropriations to provide **direct incentives for zero carbon transportation methods, including e-bikes and scooters**; and
 - c. Support the **electrification of school buses**, while maintaining control over bus battery usage rather than granting control to a utility.
7. The City supports funding for **water quality improvements**, including:
 - a. Increased funding for the **Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF)**, which supports projects that provide Chesapeake Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) nutrient and sediment reductions required under MS4 permits; and
 - b. Budget action providing adequate state appropriations to the **Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF)** in order to ensure full and timely payments under point source upgrade contracts with local governments.