

VACo's 2014 Legislative Program



November 19, 2013

2014 Legislative Program

Virginia Association of Counties

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Statements requiring federal action noted: (Federal)

Administration of Government, Public Safety and Telecommunications

Priorities

Aid to Localities

VACo requests that the Commonwealth use the most current population statistics available for the purposes of determining state aid to those localities that have experienced population growth in the ten-year period between the decennial enumerations. During that period, population statistics from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, the American Community Survey and from other established entities should be used by the Commonwealth. The General Assembly should consider the many fixed costs of services in determining aid to those localities that have remained stable or lost population.

Interoperability (State and Federal)

VACo supports the state's goal that by 2015 agencies and their representatives at the local, regional, state and federal levels will be able to communicate using compatible systems to respond more effectively during day-to-day operations and major emergencies. Local governments require new dedicated federal and state funding sources to achieve this goal.

Positions

Annexation Moratorium

VACo supports full funding of the Commonwealth's HB 599 commitments. VACo also supports the continuation of the current moratorium on city annexations regardless of whether those commitments have been met. The moratorium has promoted more intergovernmental cooperation between cities and counties, allowed counties to plan for future growth and economic development within their borders and has allowed counties to be able to protect their tax base in order to provide needed services to citizens.

Broadband (State and Federal)

VACo urges the Commonwealth and the Federal Government to assist communities in their efforts to deploy universal affordable access to broadband for all areas, particularly in underserved and rural areas while preserving local land use, permitting, fees and other local authority. Widespread deployment of broadband should be a top priority for the Commonwealth to ensure competitive economic advantages, provide

quality educational opportunities and facilitate telemedicine and other modern health care initiatives. Assistance should include economic incentives as well as budgetary and statutory policies that facilitate broadband deployment and adoption. VACo also urges state support of local and regional authorities created under the Virginia Wireless Service Authorities Act, the preservation of the powers granted under the Act, support for Virginia Resources Authority and other favorable financing mechanisms for broadband projects and improvement of the quality and accuracy of the state's broadband availability map.

Collective Bargaining for Public Employees (Federal)

VACo opposes any effort to mandate collective bargaining for public employees.

Dillon Rule/Local Authority

VACo supports relaxation of the Dillon Rule by granting and maintaining local authority and autonomy including land use matters, revenue measures, procurement and other issues of local concern. The General Assembly should extend powers currently granted to some local governments to all other local governments.

Elected Officials

VACo respects the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and seeks to work with the General Assembly to address the issues that arise when an elected official faces prosecution for crimes of moral turpitude. This includes a process for appointing a temporary replacement to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the office until the legal process is complete.

Election Costs

VACo supports legislation that would decrease the costs of elections to localities. These costs include primaries, voting equipment, personnel and voting places. Cost reduction could include requiring parties to pay for primary elections, having one date for primary elections, using paper ballots, establishing countywide voting places and other similar measures. The state should provide adequate funding to localities for optical scan and other voting equipment and registrar costs.

Election Districts

VACo supports legislation to minimize or eliminate Split Voting Precincts.

Grievance Hearings

VACo supports legislation authorizing localities to utilize an administrative hearing officer instead of a three-member panel. VACo also supports providing immunity to local government employees, officers, volunteers, administrative hearing officers and

panel members for claims arising out of participation in personnel grievance procedures.

Immigration Reform (Federal)

VACo maintains a strong commitment to ensuring the security and safety of our communities. Legislative reforms must recognize the contributions of immigrants to a complex economy, as well as the costs associated with welcoming immigrants into our communities. The U.S. Congress must enact comprehensive immigration reform that provides a funding stream sufficient to address the fiscal impact on state and local governments for any guest worker program and earned legalization program. The state and local governments require a national immigration system that is fully funded at the federal level, recognizes the realities of the marketplace, eases the fiscal stress on states and localities and properly secures our borders. It is important that the federal government establish a clear and understandable path to citizenship for those who are eligible.

Pay Day Lending

VACo supports legislation to set a total cap of 25 percent for all interest, fees and other charges for payday lending and other similar businesses such as car title loans.

Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement

VACo supports legislation to reduce required advertising for public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an alternative to newspaper advertising.

Sovereign Immunity

VACo opposes any substantive change in local governments' present defense of sovereign immunity. VACo opposes bringing counties under the Virginia Tort Claims Act.

Subpoena Five Day Rule

VACo supports a change to VA code section 8.01-407 to require subpoenas to be served at least five days before appearance is required, unless approved by a judge.

Transmission Lines

VACo supports legislation to encourage the undergrounding of high voltage transmission lines and supports effective and practical undergrounding and preservation practices when locating new transmission lines. VACo also supports legislation to preserve existing trees and vegetation in transmission line right of ways to

mitigate the visual and environmental impacts resulting from clear cutting practices and widespread use of herbicides.

Unfunded Mandates

VACo opposes unfunded mandates by the Commonwealth. When funding for a mandated program is altered, the mandate should be suspended until full funding is restored. When legislation with a cost to localities is passed by the General Assembly, the cost should be borne by the Commonwealth, and the legislation should contain a sunset clause providing that the mandate is not binding on localities until funding by the Commonwealth is provided. VACo opposes the shifting of fiscal responsibility from the state to localities for existing programs. Any unfunded mandate or shifting of responsibility should be accompanied by a full fiscal and program analysis to determine the relative costs to the state and to the locality and to assure the state is meeting its full funding responsibility before taking effect.

Community Development and Planning

Priorities

Economic and Workforce Development

VACo supports continued state funding and support for workforce training and economic development programs as effective means for making the necessary investments in infrastructure and human capital. VACo supports state economic development policies that bolster local economic development efforts. VACo also supports incentives that encourage regional economic development projects. Consultation and partnership with these local and regional efforts are critical to economic expansion.

Land Use/Growth Management Tools

Authority to plan and regulate land use should remain with local governing bodies and VACo opposes any legislation to weaken that authority. Furthermore, the General Assembly should grant localities additional tools necessary to adequately meet citizens' increasing transportation, education, public safety and other vital public infrastructure needs that are driven by new development. Such additional tools may include broad impact fee authority for all counties, adequate public facilities provisions in subdivision ordinances, state funds for the purchase of development rights, and real estate transfer charges. Current residents should not be expected to bear the cost of new growth through increased real estate taxes.

Positions

Affordable and Workforce Housing (Federal)

VACo supports increased federal and state funding and appropriate incentives to assist localities in fostering affordable housing, as well as workforce housing for employees such as teachers and first responders.

Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID)

VACo supports maintaining the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID) and increasing funding for this successful economic development program.

Impacts of Federal and Military Projects (Federal)

VACo supports increased federal and state funding to mitigate the impacts on counties affected by major federal projects, including the most recent recommendations of the

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). This support is also needed to sustain the federal and military presence in Virginia and to compete for the location of additional facilities in the Commonwealth.

Maintain Public Sector Role in Onsite Sewer Program

VACo supports an onsite sewage program at the Virginia Department of Health that protects public health and the environment in all regions of the Commonwealth. The state's program should allow localities to develop and implement policies that support the state's program. VACo supports the private sector providing onsite sewage system design, installation and repair services, as long as the services can be provided at affordable rates and in a timely manner, and as long as VDH continues to provide these direct services as well.

Port of Virginia

VACo supports expanding eligibility statewide for the Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Zone Grant Program (POV Zone Grant).

Reimbursement for Offsite Improvements

VACo supports allowing all localities to require a future developer to reimburse the initial developer a pro rata sum for offsite improvements provided by the initial developer.

Siting of Utilities

VACo supports requiring utilities to seek input from localities and property owners before any actions to construct, modify or enlarge their facilities.

Regional Cooperation

VACo supports increased state funding and additional grants of authority to promote regional initiatives. VACo also supports increased state funding for Virginia's planning district commissions, which play a key role in addressing regional challenges.

Water and Sewer

VACo supports allowing counties to enact water and sewer availability fees and mandatory water and sewer connection powers. VACo also supports clarifying language that explicitly authorizes localities to deny an application for a new water system on the basis that it does not conform to the comprehensive plan and/or is not in the best interests of the locality.

Compensation and Retirement

Priorities

Funding of State Mandated Positions

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations for constitutional officers and other state mandated positions.

Unfunded Teacher Pension Liability

Local governments and the state share responsibility for paying the cost of teacher pensions, but under GASB 68, Virginia local governments will have to begin accounting for both the state and local unfunded liabilities for teacher retirement plans after June 15, 2014 on their financial statements. VACo urges the state to account for its proportional share of the liability by paying its current share of teacher pension contributions directly to VRS. This would demonstrate to credit rating agencies and localities that the state is committed to paying its proportional share of unfunded teacher pension liabilities. It would also better protect the bond ratings of Virginia's localities by more accurately reflecting the local share of the unfunded liability.

Positions

Compensation Board

VACo supports requiring the Compensation Board to seek a local governing body's approval before authorizing personnel changes that affect localities. VACo supports a General Assembly review of potential funding and budgeting improvements that can be used in allocation of funds for constitutional officers.

Liability Insurance

Constitutional officer liability insurance has shifted from the state to local governments, which are assuming 100 percent of the cost and are mandated to purchase the insurance from the state risk management program (VARISK). VACo opposes this shift. In the alternative, localities should have the option to seek competitive pricing for liability insurance.

Line of Duty

VACo calls on the General Assembly to fully fund the Line of Duty Act (LODA) obligations and return LODA to a state program. LODA benefit eligibility determinations should be the responsibility of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission and not the State Comptroller's Office.

Sheriffs' Departments Staffing Standards

VACo supports legislation to change the Compensation Board's minimum staffing standards to fund at least 10 deputy sheriffs per county. The current standard provides one deputy per 1,577 people, with a minimum state funding level of five deputies per county. In a county with a small population but a large land area, five deputies are simply not adequate to perform 24-hour law enforcement, court security and other legally required duties.

Short Term Disability

VACo urges the state to remove the short term disability mandate from the new Hybrid Retirement Plan. Localities have already addressed short term disability issues through their leave and benefit policies.

State Assistance for Police Departments

VACo supports increasing state assistance for police departments through "599" Aid to Localities. This funding is designed to equalize state funding between counties in which the sheriff department provides law enforcement and those cities, counties and towns with a police department.

Workers' Compensation Medical Costs

VACo supports the adoption of Medicare-based fee schedules for setting medical provider fees in worker's compensation cases in Virginia, instead of the prevailing community rate standard now used. This will make worker's compensation coverage more affordable for Virginia's employers and provide fair compensation to medical providers in Virginia.

Education

Priorities

Education Funding

VACo supports full funding for the biennial re-benchmark of Virginia's Standards of Quality (SOQ). It is essential for the state to fund fully its constitutional responsibilities and all mandates associated with K-12 public education. VACo encourages the state to expand the SOQ to better recognize localities funding efforts towards local school divisions.

VACo supports full state funding for public education including the SOQ, targeted incentive programs, capital and maintenance support and teacher salaries. Full state funding should be achieved without reduction to other parts of state public education budgets or to the other core services. Should state general funding diminish, local autonomy should be increased and state education mandates reduced. VACo continues to oppose unfunded mandates.

VACo supports the current practice whereby all year-end funds appropriated to the school divisions by the locality revert to the locality, retaining discretion with the governing body to evaluate and approve the reallocation of year-end fund balances to address the capital or one-time expenditure requirements of local school districts.

Positions

Cost of Competing

In addition to meeting its obligations to fully fund instructional and support staff for all localities, VACo supports the full reinstatement of Cost of Competing Adjustment (COCA) for teachers and support staff. These funds are necessary to attract and retain employees in areas with a higher cost of living. FY COCA funding levels for support staff are \$23.4 million short of full funding, creating a wide funding gap for local governments that should receive this funding.

CPR defibrillator Certification

To respond to emergency situations VACo believes an adequate number of school employees certified in CPR and defibrillator certification use should always be available when school activities are occurring. VACo believes the Commonwealth should provide additional adequate funding to (1) ensure teachers and school personnel

receive training in CPR and defibrillator use, and (2) for the cost of providing and maintenance of defibrillators.

Library system

VACo supports increased state aid to the library system.

Environment & Agriculture

Priorities

Water Quality Improvement Funding

VACo supports effective partnerships among and across all levels of government to improve water quality.

VACo urges state and federal agencies to carefully consider impacts on local governments of any initiatives intended to reduce loadings of pollutants into state waters from both point and non-point sources. In order for comprehensive, watershed-wide water quality improvement strategies to be effective, major and reliable forms of financial and technical assistance from federal and state governments will be necessary. VACo supports the goal of improved water quality, but will vigorously oppose provisions of any strategy that threatens to penalize local governments by withdrawing current forms of financial assistance or imposing monitoring, management or similar requirements on localities without providing sufficient resources to accomplish those processes. VACo strongly opposes the imposition of a state fee, tax or surcharge on water, sewer, solid waste or any service provided by a local government or authority.

Positions

Agriculture Production

VACo supports increased availability of local food for purchase. To accomplish this, VACo supports the establishment of farmers' markets and the use of food stamps for purchases at farmers' markets, policies to increase direct delivery of food from growers to consumers and funding for the design and construction of regional processing facilities to facilitate delivery of locally-produced food.

Aquifer protection

VACo supports initiatives to assure adoption of all appropriate actions to reduce high chloride concentrations and loss of artesian head pressure in Virginia's aquifers. VACo also requests that the Commonwealth conduct a review of regulations, and promote education to promote reclamation of water on a local level for industrial and irrigation uses to offset future demands on all ground and surface water used for human consumption in the Commonwealth.

Biosolids

VACo contends that the land application of biosolids, when conducted properly, provides important benefits to the public and Virginia's agricultural sector. To reduce risks that might occur because of improper land application, VACo supports an effective statewide program and regulations governing land application of biosolids that protect the environment, public health and safety. VACo also supports the ability of local governments to monitor compliance with such regulations and the ability of local governments to submit recommendations for site-specific conditions into the permitting process.

Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act (Federal)

VACo supports the proposed Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act of 2013, which seeks to achieve greater cost-effectiveness in meeting pollution reduction targets. This legislation will help localities address the expensive costs associated with Chesapeake Bay cleanup.

Dam Safety Standards

VACo supports a review of Dam Safety Standards administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation to evaluate ways of reducing their financial impacts upon local government and property owners while also protecting public safety.

Energy Efficiency

VACo endorses aggressive initiatives among all levels of government to reduce dependence upon foreign sources of energy, to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and to improve energy efficiency. VACo also supports production of renewable energy in Virginia through the implementation of Renewable Portfolio Standards while continuing to support energy policies that take advantage of our abundant coal deposits and natural gas reserves while protecting the welfare and safety of agriculture and our water supplies.

Humane Investigators

VACo opposes legislation requiring local governments to accept court appointed humane investigators. Humane investigators should only be appointed when specifically requested by a local governing body. Local governments should have the option of terminating a humane investigator program.

Hydraulic fracturing

Advances in technology for the extraction of natural gas known as "hydraulic fracturing" has the potential to tap vast reserves in what are known as the Marcellus shale and Taylorsville Basin deposits. Concerns about how the process of hydraulic

fracturing could impact both public and private groundwater supplies have been raised both regionally and nationally. VACo supports a state regulatory program that addresses these concerns while protecting the authority of local governments to regulate this type of mining activity through their land use ordinances.

Industrial Hemp

VACo urges the Commonwealth of Virginia to support Congressional action to adopt the Industrial Hemp Farming Act and grant states the authority to license and regulate the production of hemp as an industrial and agricultural commodity which, in turn, will open markets for farmers, manufacturers, businesses and entrepreneurs in the emerging and growing hemp industry.

Invasive Species

VACo supports adequate funding to implement the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan.

Land Conservation

VACo supports targeted initiatives to facilitate the protection of 400,000 additional acres of land for conservation purposes. VACo also supports a Purchase of Development Rights program that includes state funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, and that provides incentives for landowners at all income levels to participate in the program. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forestal land and environmentally sensitive areas in the Commonwealth.

Local Regulation of Timbering

VACo supports amendments to legislation to state explicitly that, once a subdivision plan is submitted for local approval at the request of the property owner for a development project, any timbering on the property is subject to local development regulations.

Non-point Source Pollution

VACo supports a well-financed state program to address the problem of non-point source runoff from agricultural operations. The program should effectively encourage implementation of priority best management practices such as nutrient management planning, use of cover crops, continuous no-till farming, development of forested riparian buffers and livestock stream exclusion.

Onsite Wastewater Systems

VACo supports a legislative study of problems encountered by localities when enforcing requirements relating to onsite sewage systems, including the five-year pump-out requirement by localities subject to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. VACo also supports legislation ensuring that potential buyers of real property are told about the type, size and maintenance requirements and associated costs of the wastewater systems on the property prior to the signing of the initial sales contract and the recordation of engineered systems on the plat and deed at the time of the sale.

Recycling

VACo supports the development of more aggressive strategies by the state to develop markets for recycled materials.

Renewable Fuels Standard (Federal)

VACo request that the Environmental Protection Agency should immediately rescind the Renewable Fuel Standards II. for the calendar year 2013 to relieve upward pressure on the price of corn and economic hardships.

Southern Rivers Watershed

VACo supports continued funding for the Southern Rivers Watershed Enhancement Program to improve water quality in non-Chesapeake Bay watersheds.

State Water Control Board

VACo supports legislation requiring the composition of the State Water Control Board to be regionally balanced while at the same time selecting appointees with the necessary education and experience.

Stormwater

VACo supports adequate funding to enable local governments to start-up new stormwater management programs that must be established by July 1, 2014. Prior to implementation, VACo supports a comprehensive study of the long-term fiscal impacts on localities and reallocation of funding from the stormwater “integration” legislation that passed the 2012 General Assembly. VACo believes it will be critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the fee structure in the Virginia Stormwater Management Permit regulations as the chief source of revenue for funding local stormwater management programs.

Stormwater Agreement in Lieu of Plan

VACo supports an amendment to Virginia’s Stormwater Management program that would provide a VSMP plan approving authority with the option of requiring an

“Agreement in lieu of a Stormwater Management Plan” for single-family homes and structures for small businesses that are not part of a common plan of development.

Stormwater Common Plan of Development

VACo supports amendments to Virginia’s Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) providing that within a common plan of development, lots within a subdivision shall be developed under a common stormwater plan that holds the developer responsible for obtaining full VSMP permit coverage and maintaining all permit documentation.

Stormwater Compliance Deadline

VACo supports legislation that would delay, from July 1, 2014, to July 1, 2015, the date by which stormwater programs must be put into effect by local governments.

Stormwater Construction General Permit

VACo supports the removal of the requirement from the Construction General Permit that permittees must comply with Virginia’s post construction standards for water quality.

Stormwater Fees

VACo supports an amendment to Virginia’s Stormwater Management Law that would distribute a maximum of 10 percent of revenues from statewide stormwater fees to the Virginia Stormwater Management Fund with the remaining 90 percent remaining with local governments.

Stormwater Funding Plan

VACo supports an amendment to Virginia’s Stormwater Management Program that would authorize a local government to fund its VSMP program through such sources deemed appropriate by the local governing body without approval by the State Water Control Board.

Stormwater Hearing Procedures

VACo supports an amendment to Virginia’s Stormwater Management Law allowing for VSMP hearing procedures to be conformed to procedures under Virginia’s Erosion and Sediment Control Law.

Stormwater Reciprocity Recognition

VACo supports legislation to require Virginia to continue the long-standing reciprocity recognition of certification programs of other states for stormwater Best Management Practices that meet or exceed Virginia’s VSMP requirements.

Uranium Mining

VACo supports continuation of a moratorium on uranium mining and milling within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

VACo supports sufficient funding for the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

VACo supports legislation that would increase the general fund appropriation to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, permit an increase in transfer fees, or provide full funding to the Foundation through alternative means.

Waste Management

VACo supports broad authority for local governments to adopt flow control ordinances. VACo supports funding for infrastructure to increase energy harvest from the waste system.

Water Supply Planning

VACo supports additional appropriations adequate to ensure full funding by the state for the ongoing development and implementation of state-mandated water supply plans.

Finance

Priorities

Local Finances

VACo supports the authority of county governments to levy and collect revenue from local business taxes. VACo requests county government representation on all study or legislative commissions that impact local government through local revenue or services. VACo opposes mandated new or expanded funding requirements on counties.

Positions

County Authority Including Equal Taxation

VACo supports granting counties the authority cities and towns currently have to enact local excise taxes including the cigarette tax, admissions tax, transient occupancy tax and meals tax. VACo also supports granting counties specific powers enumerated to cities and towns under the Uniform Charter Powers Act.

Fiscal Impact Statements

In furtherance of the objectives to evaluate the local fiscal impact of proposed legislation, VACo recommends that §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia be amended to provide a better filter to stop new unfunded mandates from moving through the legislative process without a timely fiscal impact analysis. Specifically, VACo recommends the reinstatement of the first day introduction requirement for bills with local fiscal impact.

Funding of State Mandated Positions and Jails

VACo urges the Commonwealth to meet its full funding obligations for constitutional officers and other state mandated positions. Moreover, any change to the definition of state-responsible prisoner or other terms that result in increased cost or operational issues for local or regional jails should be fully funded by the state.

Local Government Revenues

VACo opposes elimination or reduction of specific local tax revenues, including local business taxes.

VACo supports granting counties the option or authority to increase the local sales and use tax by 0.5 percent to help offset state budget reductions affecting localities, without referendum.

VACo supports legislation that extends the imposition and collection of the local transient occupancy taxes to state owned parks and campgrounds that provide lodging.

Local Government Mandate Review

VACo supports legislation that continues the work of Gov. McDonnell's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review. The Task Force will cease to exist in July 2014 and should be reauthorized in statutory language.

Local Ordinance Violations

VACo requests the repeal of budget language enacted by the 2012 General Assembly that authorized the deposit of all collections from General District Courts, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts, Combined District Courts and the Magistrate System to the State Treasury for local ordinance violation penalties. This legislative action removed a source of local revenue for many localities.

State Tax Reform

VACo calls upon the Commonwealth to strengthen the stability of the general fund by initiating state tax reform. Significant tax reform will help to buttress the Commonwealth's general fund that finances most core government functions. Tax reform should include a restructuring of state income and sales and use taxes with the intent of maintaining sufficient revenues to meet current and foreseeable core service demands. Reform should include revisiting specific state tax reductions the Commonwealth enacted in better economic times that may no longer be affordable.

Health & Human Resources

Priorities

Health and Human Resources Funding

VACo supports state policies and funding to ensure the Commonwealth's at-risk families have access to high quality and appropriate services. The Commonwealth should fully fund localities for state mandated human services and provide the necessary program flexibility to enable localities to provide comprehensive and case-tailored services. Additionally, increased state funding for the Virginia Juvenile Crime Control Act will enhance the ability of local governments to plan and receive youth offenders back into the community (re-entry services).

Positions

Aging/Long-Term Care

VACo supports efforts that allow the elderly to remain at home in a safe and secure environment. VACo urges the General Assembly to provide sufficient funding for companion services, in-home services and home delivered meals.

Behavioral Health Care

VACo supports continued funding by the Commonwealth sufficient to allow community services boards to meet adequately the charge of providing services through a community-based system of care.

Comprehensive Services Act

VACo supports a requirement that the State Executive Council and Comprehensive Services Act follow the Administrative Process Act in promulgating, amending, or repealing regulations. Furthermore, VACo supports state CSA policies that prevent the shift of costs of services for at-risk children fully to local government CPMT-approved services.

VACo supports reasonable efforts by the state to give localities an opportunity to improve practice following audit findings, and that denial of funds be implemented in a rational, progressive fashion similar to that proposed by IV-E funding and other state and federal funding sources.

Early Intervention

VACo supports sustainable funding for Part C Early Intervention, which is an entitlement program that provides services for Virginia's infants and toddlers. VACo

also requests the General Assembly address funding concerns by increasing state general funding. Underfunding this entitlement program puts pressure on local revenues to fill funding gaps for this mandated service.

Group Homes

VACo supports the ability of a locality to hold a public meeting when a group home is established in the locality's jurisdiction. Further, VACo encourages the state to enforce appropriate regulation of group homes.

Healthcare

VACo supports continued state funding for offered dental care, school nurses and preventive services and maternal and child health programs through local health departments and local school systems. VACo encourages the state to prepare for emergency health services and develop and fund incentives that would alleviate the nursing shortages felt in many communities.

Prevention Services

VACo supports increased state general funding for startup costs associated with community-based service programs. VACo recognizes that programs, such as Healthy Families, Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) of Virginia, Smart Beginnings, and the Resource Mother, are models that are operated throughout the state and requests the General Assembly to provide additional funding for these and other home-based activities. Reductions in prevention programs will put numerous youth at risk of high-end CSA placements.

Transparency

VACo encourages state transparency in the delivery of human service programs with highest standards of accountability, delivery of services, funding of programs, and any fundamental changes.

Volunteer EMS and Rescue Squad Training

VACo supports practical and reasonable Initial certification and ongoing continuing medical education (CME) requirements for county EMS and rescue squad volunteers. VACo recognizes the vital importance of volunteer EMS and rescue squad training but does not support unreasonable education requirements that discourage public volunteer service.

Transportation

Priorities

Devolution of Secondary Roads

VACo vigorously opposes legislative or administrative initiatives that would transfer to counties the responsibility for the construction, maintenance or operation of new and existing roads.

Local-State Transportation Funding and Cooperation

VACo would like to thank the Administration and the General Assembly for their actions during the 2013 Session to pass HB 2313. The Governor and many members of the General Assembly worked together and passed an historic transportation funding bill that will provides substantial resources to begin addressing the region's transportation needs.

While we believe this is a great step towards addressing our infrastructure needs, we remain concerned about the lack of secondary and urban construction funding. Due to legislative changes in 2012, the Commonwealth Transportation Board has the authority to allocate up to \$500 million to priority projects before funds are provided to the construction fund. It is recommended that this set-aside be eliminated or modified to, at the very least, ensure equitable distribution of funds to each region.

Additionally, due to this provision, the secondary and urban road programs are not expected to receive new funds until FY 2017. This is concerning, as our localities have not received funds for this program since FY 2010.

Another concern is that the 2012 bill provided VDOT and the CTB the ability to decide whether a local transportation plan is consistent with the Commonwealth's priorities. While efforts to better coordinate local and state transportation planning are appreciated, we want to ensure that land use planning remains a local responsibility.

Positions

Billboards

VACo supports a requirement that proposed billboards in the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) right of way conform to local zoning and other applicable ordinances and local approval processes.

Corridors of Statewide Significance

VACo opposes the reduction of local control that is associated with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's process of designating Corridors of Statewide Significance.

Local Public Hearings

VACo supports the local ability and option to request a second public hearing when new federal funds are allocated to the Virginia Department of Transportation for projects in a locality's jurisdiction.

Highway Tolls

VACo opposes the installation of toll facilities on Virginia's interstate highways until the Commonwealth Transportation Board has thoroughly reviewed and assessed the components of a long-term capital improvement program, has identified and compared all available funding alternatives and has adopted a proposal that matches capital improvements with realistically available funding sources. Further, VACo supports legislation to require that prior approval of the General Assembly shall be obtained prior to the imposition and collection of tolls on any interstate highway in Virginia.

Inter-Directional Signage Program

VACo supports a requirement that any signs installed under VDOT's Inter-directional Sign Program, including the Tourist Oriented Directional Signs Program, conform to local ordinances, including any local approval processes.

Maintenance Priorities

VACo supports a requirement imposed upon VDOT to implement a notification plan with the local governing body to establish maintenance priorities.

Parking

VACo supports general authority for counties to adopt ordinances regulating, including prohibiting, the parking of boats, RVs, utility trailers, campers, etc. on subdivision streets.

Rail Enhancement Fund

VACo supports authority for counties to approve Rail Enhancement Fund projects funded by the state and constructed within their jurisdictions.

Rest Stops

VACo supports federal legislation to allow commercialization of rest stops on the interstate highway system in Virginia.

Road Construction and Maintenance

VACo supports legislation that would prohibit VDOT from requiring localities to administer any transportation project without the consent of the local governing body. In addition, VACo supports amendments to legislation that would require VDOT to administer all projects financed by VDOT, unless otherwise agreed to by the county. If VDOT cannot administer the projects due to limited resources, then VDOT's consultant services shall be utilized or the locality shall have the option to use VDOT's consultant services on locally administered projects financed by VDOT.

Securities for Subdivision Streets

VACo supports authority for a local governing body to determine requirements for developer securities for the construction of subdivision streets.

Separation of Federal Funds (Federal)

VACo supports granting authority to counties, working with VDOT, to determine the percentage of federal funds applied to all secondary road projects within their jurisdiction. In addition, for any locally administered road projects, the county should be allowed to use all state funds, as long as they can obligate their federal funds on other projects.

Service Contracts

VACo supports administrative changes allowing all localities to use professional service contracts similar to other agencies of the Commonwealth (i.e., Virginia Department of General Services).

Truck Size and Weight (Federal)

VACo strongly opposes any legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight beyond the current federal standards, thereby stressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's road systems and putting highways, roads and bridges at risk of increased damage or deterioration.

Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness and Volunteer Recruitment & Retention (Federal)

VACo urges the General Assembly to maintain current state funding and make certain that localities, often the first responders, are included in the planning process for homeland security and emergency preparedness measures. Federal funds received for homeland security and emergency preparedness must flow through the state to local agencies, departments, and authorities to pay for eligible costs. In furtherance of this goal, VACo supports legislation that provides a local option for increased incentives for

the recruitment and retention of volunteer public safety personnel who are crucial in these situations.

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