

CCAN Action Fund Legislative Priorities 2025

Fund clean transportation (HB1791 & SB1225)

Transportation is the greatest contributor to climate change in Virginia, constituting over 50% of emissions. While federal funding and the private market will create electric vehicle charging infrastructure along major highway corridors, the state must invest in charging infrastructure in rural and low-income areas to ensure local residents can benefit from EVs and these areas remain accessible to visitors, supporting the vital tourism industry in many of our scenic and rural localities.

Support Community Renewable Energy Programs (HB1883 & SB1040; HB2266; HB2346 & SB1100; SB853 & HB2356)

Small-scale clean energy resources like rooftop and residential battery storage can play a major role in our clean energy future, but Virginia currently lacks the program infrastructure to coordinate resource integration. The state should create programs that allow utilities to aggregate and flexibly dispatch DERs to help address spikes in demand (HB2346 & SB), which replicate the flexible nature of expensive and polluting gas peaker plants. This should go hand in hand with greater incentives for storage and a larger carve-out for DER in the Virginia Clean Economy Act (HB1883 & SB1040) in order to unleash its full potential. The state must also implement reforms to facilitate affordable interconnection of small-scale resources (HB2266) and ensure clean energy jobs receive fair wages in the absence of federal leadership (HB2356 & SB853).

Reform solar siting (HB2126 / SB1190)

91% of Virginians believe landowners should have the right to build solar projects on their land, and 85% oppose local governments limiting property rights by placing bans on solar development.¹ Yet a growing number of localities have severely restricted or banned solar development, and project denial rates are accelerating rapidly.

Virginia cannot achieve 100% clean energy without significant utility-scale solar buildout, the cheapest source of electricity across the board. Already, utilities are turning towards new, polluting fossil fuel generation to meet soaring demand. The state must depoliticize solar permitting by including objective decision makers with expertise in grid and environmental implications in the approval process, and set parameters around localities' ability to restrict solar development.

Extreme Weather Relief Act (HB2233 / SB1123)

¹ https://www.energyrightva.com/_files/ugd/86602e_9dfc06c8e7094668a707b7c25ecffef7.pdf

Five states have started to take action to recover the economic and environmental costs of fossil fuel-driven climate change through “climate superfunds.” Legislation authorizes the state to recover financial damages from fossil fuel companies that have had a measurable negative impact on the state’s assets. Such bills have passed in Vermont and New York, and have been introduced in Maryland, California, and Massachusetts. Funds accrued can provide relief to residents and localities following extreme weather events and create more resilient clean energy infrastructure to future-proof our grid as climate disasters worsen.

Place Guard Rails on Data Center Growth (SB1196 / HB2027 / SB960 & HB2101)

Big Tech companies are requesting large amounts of electricity in Virginia to operate data centers clustered in Northern Virginia. The richest companies in the world, which are currently eligible for large tax breaks from the state, should be required to meet their electricity demands efficiently and with clean energy in order to qualify for those benefits. Some of these companies have informal green energy pledges – but the state should ensure that all facilities meet these same standards (SB1196), and have oversight over massive energy requests (HB2027).

In addition, everyday Virginians should not be on the hook to pay for the energy infrastructure that these massive energy users demand. The State Corporation Commission must reassess whether our the current cost allocation prevents ratepayer-subsidized data center energy infrastructure (HB2101 / SB960).

Develop plan to improve low-income energy efficiency (SB777 & HB1935)

Currently, state-run energy efficiency programs are uncoordinated and there is little data to indicate the extent to which they are reaching those most in need. The state should develop a cross-government taskforce to coordinate existing programs, and suggest new ones, with the end goal of developing a plan to provide low-income households weatherization and energy efficiency retrofits by 2033. Similar legislation has passed in Maryland.