

Title of the Policy Proposal: Healthy & Affordable Homes

Subject Area of the Proposal: Housing, Environment

For State or Federal Consideration: State

Budgetary or Authorizing: (Does the Proposal Seek Funding or Legal Authorities?) Budgetary funding

Short Description of the Proposal:

Support a suite of healthy, sustainable, and affordable housing bills as they arise in the 2026 legislative session. The Environmental Policy Commission is generally supportive of affordable housing bills as there is direct linkage between climate change, community health, and housing affordability.

Healthy homes are tied to indoor air quality, which is improved through high efficiency HVAC and all-electric equipment (no onsite fossil fuel combustion). Higher efficiency homes also reduce utility expenses, which makes housing more affordable – particularly for those suffering from the energy burden, in which an excessive percent of income is spent on utilities. Sustainability increases both the health and affordability of homes, and the EPC would like to see broad support of this to help fellow Virginians across the Commonwealth.

This could manifest through expansion of funding of the Solar for All, Weatherization Assistance Program, and Leap Program for Virginia residents so that we can proactively safeguard our electrical grid, improve health outcomes, and reduce energy costs.

Has this Proposal been Introduced as Legislation in a Previous Session?

Various affordable housing bills have been introduced historically. A few bills & budget allocations were vetoed or eliminated by the Governor in the 2025 session that we would like to prioritize in the 2026 session.

If So, Please Provide Applicable Bill Numbers and Years it Was Introduced:

HB 1973: Affordable Housing Preservation (Sponsored by Del. Bennett-Parker in 2025)

- HB 1973 would grant localities the authority to establish a Right of First Refusal (ROFR) during the sale of publicly supported housing at risk of expiring affordability
- Passed House & Senate, Vetoed by Governor

Increase the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF) to \$150M Annually (Sponsored by Sen. Ebbin, Del. Bulova in 2025)

- Annual VHTF funding remains at \$87.5M (increase not funded in the budget)

Relevant Background (e.g. -- what's the policy problem or status quo that this policy would fix or improve?): Housing affordability

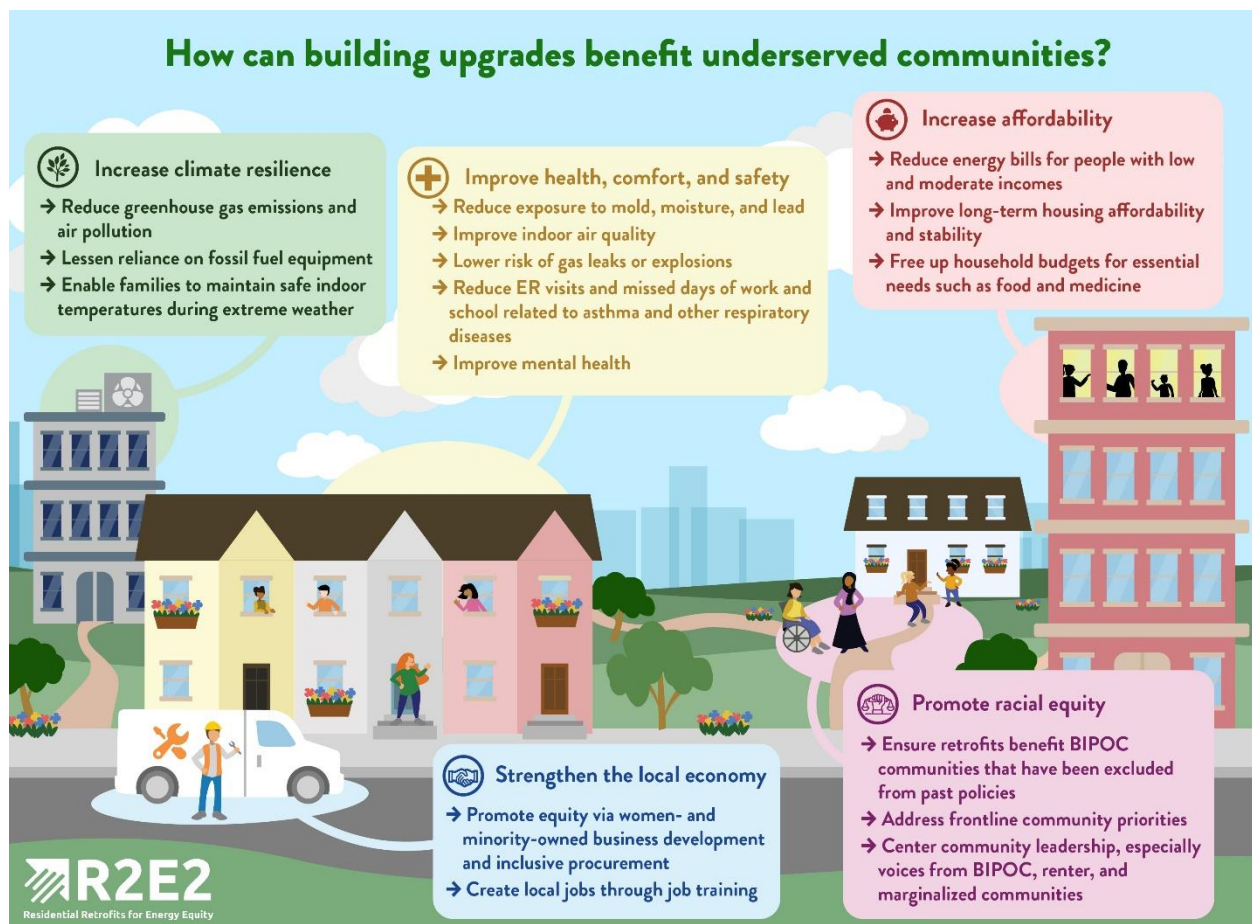
Has Your Commission's/Board's Liaison from the City Attorney's Office Determined Whether There's a Need for the Authority or Code Change You're Requesting (for example, does the City already have the authority to take that action without seeking a legal change)? We have not liaised with the City

Attorney's Office but we do not believe these require legal authority changes, just budget allocation from the state.

Related Federal or State Statutes (is there any precedent anywhere else -- another state or on the federal level -- that you're aware of?):

Any Relevant Research or Analysis:

- Alexandria's [Healthy Homes Program](#)
- City of Alexandria's [2025 Community Health Assessment](#) (p38-39 for Environment)
- [Housing at the intersection of health and climate change \(2025\)](#)
- [How Cities Can Tackle Both the Affordable Housing and Climate Crises](#)
- [Without Affordable, Accessible, and Adequate Housing, Health Has No Foundation \(2024\)](#)
- [Virginia Housing Trust Fund](#)
- The Dose Podcast: [Climate Change as a Public Health Issue](#)
- ACEEE's [Health and Environment Program webpage](#)
- ACEEE's [Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity \(R2E2\) program](#) (scroll down for infographic)



Any Relevant Cost Estimates or Cost Savings Estimates:

HB 1973: It is anticipated that any costs DHCD may incur can be absorbed within existing resources.

Increase the Virginia Housing Trust Fund (VHTF) to \$150M Annually: Increased of \$62.5M annually.

Pros and Cons of the Proposal: Increased supply of healthy affordable housing will improve the lives of Virginians by improving their health and reducing their utility expenses.

Possible Supporting Organizations (stakeholder allies):

Alexandria Public Health Advisory Committee (Dr. Jerome Cordts, Chair of the Public Health Advisory Committee, supported via email sent Sept 28, 2025). Virginia Housing Alliance (non-partisan non-profit dedicated to ending homelessness in Virginia).

Possible Opposing Organizations (stakeholder opponents):

Project developers