

Title of the Policy Proposal: Improved Climate Resiliency (Extreme Heat and Flood Mitigation) and Increased Budget for Related Local Initiatives

Subject Area of the Proposal: Climate Resiliency

For State or Federal Consideration: State

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

Short Description of the Proposal:

Support extreme heat and flood climate resilience bills as they arise in the 2026 legislative session. Specifically, we are supportive of increasing budget for climate resiliency activities and supporting bills that allow for more local authority/control of climate resiliency requirements and codes. Given the federal government's proposed FEMA cuts, state-level support of resilience against increasing severe weather events will be increasingly important. This could be through increased funding for disaster recovery, strengthening of building code against future severe weather events, investments in public infrastructure to address flooding and extreme heat.

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

Various climate resilience bills have been introduced historically that we would like to support if they are resurrected. Additionally, we want to preserve or increase funding for existing programs in the budget.

Assuming the next Governor has Virginia re-join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), some resilience funding will resume for localities to increase resilience measures. However, improving resilience is expensive and requires significant infrastructure investments beyond what RGGI will provide.

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

Increase budget for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF). The FY26 needs assessment is approximately \$46M with cumulative needs through FY29 of \$189M. SLAF is a state and local matching grant program that protects and improves the health of our waterways by funding the locality's stormwater projects.

Increase budget for the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP). VCAP reimburses homeowners, community associations (e.g., HOAs), businesses, schools, and places of worship to reduce stormwater volume and pollutant loads entering our rivers. VCAP was funded at \$4M in the FY25-26 state budget. Funding for VCAP would need to increase to \$7M to meet the growing demands of stormwater management.

HB 701 (Sponsored by Kaye Kory in 2022): Allows for localities to set more stringent building codes related to energy efficiency and conservation. Subcommittee recommended passing by indefinitely. We are strongly supportive of this bill being resurrected, but we would like for it to be broader and not limited to just Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Virginia localities should be able to set more stringent heat and stormwater requirements for their area.

Relevant Background (e.g. -- what's the policy problem or status quo that this policy would fix or improve?): Climate resiliency (flooding and heat islands)

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 believe implementing more stringent codes/requirements would require legal authority from the state legislature.

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:

- [Building Resilience and Strengthening Recovery \(Virginia Conservation Network\)](#)
- [Ensuring Long-Term Flood Resilience \(Virginia Conservation Network\)](#)
- Alexandria's [Energy and Climate Change Action Plan](#) (p82 for climate adaptation strategies)
- EPA [Heat Island Effect webpage](#)
- [100 Resilient Cities](#) program
- ULI "[Parks that protect](#)" resilience report
- ULI "[Surge: Coastal Resilience and Real Estate](#)" report
- ULI "[Scorched: Extreme Heat and Real Estate](#)" report

Any Relevant Cost Estimates or Cost Savings Estimates:

VCAP: +\$3M

SLAF: +\$6M

Pros and Cons of the Proposal: Avoided damages from severe weather events.

Possible Supporting Organizations (stakeholder allies):

Alexandria Beautification Commission (they historically are supportive of tree canopy bills, which could help with heat islands).

Alexandria Park & Recreation Commission (they are supportive of reducing heat islands and improving flood resilience in parks and open space).

Cities across Virginia are facing extreme heat and flooding – we anticipate this to be an issue with support widely from coastal areas like Hampton Roads to urban.

Possible Opposing Organizations (stakeholder opponents):

Project developers