



Oct 4, 2024

Subject: Environmental Policy Commission's 2025 Legislative Agenda to drive climate action and support Eco-City Alexandria

Dear Mr. Mayor, Madam Vice Mayor, other City Council members and City Manager,

The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) is pleased to share its legislative agenda to drive climate action and support Eco-City Alexandria. Per the Environmental Action Plan, Climate Emergency Declaration, and Energy and Climate Change Action Plan, the City has shown its commitment and support of climate action and environmental sustainability, and we aim to see similar City leadership in its legislative actions in Richmond.

This letter identifies legislative priorities that further advance Alexandria's Eco-City Agenda to help meet climate goals, advance resilience, and support environmental justice. This year, to better align with and show support behind environmental priorities across the Commonwealth, the EPC has identified specific items from the Virginia League of Conservation Voters' legislative priorities list that are particularly relevant and important to Alexandria. Where possible, we encourage the legislation's specific language to include approaches to measure and evaluate the impact of the legislative items being passed.

First and foremost, we see the importance of **defending any rollbacks to Virginia's existing climate policy: the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA), participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and participation in the Advanced Clean Cars Program**. These policies are crucial to advancing decarbonization across the Commonwealth, and to avoid going backwards on the progress we've made to date.

Second, we see value in playing offense, despite the opposition or lack of commitment from the Governor to adopting them. Priorities include:

- **Expanding electric vehicle access via state dedicated support for charging infrastructure and point of sale rebates** – transportation electrification is a key element of climate action. We also encourage budget amendments to fund the EV rebate bill passed in the 2021 GA session and fund the electric school bus rebate program also passed in the 2021 GA session.
- **Expanding the use of distributed generation in Virginia's clean energy transition** – including capping/reducing utility interconnection fees or providing a cap assessment for distributed renewable energy generation, as well as expanding the community/shared solar program.



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- **Support for vehicles/tools that expand local authority on issues like energy efficiency, solar ready building design, building electrification, etc** – this may also include issues such stretch codes for buildings, stormwater reduction, electric bicycles, and an energy benchmarking or building performance ordinance
- **Fully fund the state Virginia Department of Energy and their implementation of the state administered rebate program for energy efficiency funded via the federal Inflation Reduction Act** – to support Alexandria businesses and residents, and their service contractors, in decarbonizing their buildings
- **Create the Virginia Green Infrastructure Bank** – an independent authority to promote and catalyze investment in qualified projects that reduce GHG emissions, assist climate-impacted communities, and promote environmental justice
- **Support for Healthy Schools legislative concepts** - such as indoor air quality standards, energy efficiency standards, and solar schools opportunities
- **Support for the Virginia Forever coalition agenda, working to expand state funding for natural resources protection** – for what natural resources we have in Alexandria, we want to preserve.

Thank you for continuing to support Eco-City Alexandria on its journey to address climate change and set up our City for environmental successes that benefit all of Alexandria. Please reach out with any questions or clarifications.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marta Schantz".

Marta Schantz
EPC Chair