



May 31, 2017

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
Member, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Member, U.S. Senate

The Honorable David A. Brat
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Rob Wittman
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Scott W. Taylor
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Barbara B. Comstock
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable A. Donald McEachin
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.
Member, U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Members of the Virginia Delegation:

VIRGINIA*forever* is a diverse coalition of leading business and environmental organizations who advocate on state water quality and land conservation policy and funding matters.

Since VIRGINIA*forever*'s 2008 founding, we have worked closely with Virginia governors, the General Assembly, and state environmental agencies to help secure hundreds of millions of dollars to promote and protect our waters and lands. We believe our efforts benefit the Commonwealth of Virginia and its environment.

Over the past decade, VIRGINIA*forever* has focused on state policy and funding. We have not incorporated into our mission federal advocacy. Until now.



Individual Members: Robert Dunn • Ann Jennings • Henry P. Long • Maureen Matsen • Carol Wampler

VIRGINIA*forever*'s business and environmental coalition only takes policy positions when consensus is achieved. We do not vote. Our members are uniform in our concern about the proposed cuts in federal funding, which would clearly impact Virginia's environmental agencies. Such drastic cuts would be devastating to their ability to carry out their clean-water, clean-air, and land-preservation missions, including timely environmental permitting and effective environmental enforcement.

Let us focus on just two of Virginia's environmental agencies.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received \$50.4 million (FY18) in federal funds (28% of its entire budget). Most of its federal funds come from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, in the proposed budget," EPA's budget is to be slashed by \$5.65 billion, or 31%. Such significant cut – which would certainly impact funds allocated to states – would be devastating to DEQ's water, air, and waste regulatory programs.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) received \$36.4 million (FY18) in federal funds (36% of its entire budget). Its federal funds come from a number of sources, including EPA, Department of Interior (DOI), and Department of Transportation (DOT), among others. In addition to EPA's cut, the preliminary spending blueprint proposed DOI to be cut by 12% and DOT by 13%. Such cuts – including to the National Park Service, part of DOI – would severely impact DCR's ability to carry out its conservation mission.

There are other Virginia natural resources agencies – the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Department of Forestry, and the Department of Historic Resources, among others – that receive considerable federal funding and which, too, would be harmed by such proposed federal funding cuts.

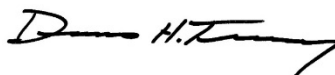
Perhaps that which most highlights the impact in the President's cuts to natural resources programs is the total elimination of the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program – zeroing out its \$73 million budget. The Chesapeake Bay Program is the linchpin of the widely-acclaimed regional partnership comprised of local, state, and federal governments and non-profit organizations across the New York-to-Virginia watershed which is working to restore our treasured Bay. The restoration work has begun to yield measurable progress. The states must be allowed to finish this job. EPA funding is the glue that holds the states together.

VIRGINIA*forever* is an unmatched business-environmental coalition of advocates. Ours is an increasingly relied upon voice in Virginia for leadership on natural resources policy and funding issues. As such, we maintain a close working relationship with Virginia's environmental agencies, and we have first-hand understanding of the important role federal funding plays in their budgets and missions.

We understand that the proposed budget is the first-step submission to the House of Representatives, whose Budget and Appropriations committees will then authorize and approve spending, and that the Senate also will have its say on the ultimate budget plan.

VIRGINIA*forever* encourages you to give strong consideration to the impacts the proposed cuts would have to Virginia's environmental agencies and thus to our natural resources. We also want to serve as a resource to you and your staff. VIRGINIA*forever* members, individually and collectively, have a great deal of expertise and in-house information on Virginia's natural resources and funding needs. We are happy to share that expertise and information with you.

Sincerely,



Dennis H. Treacy
Chair, VIRGINIA*forever* Board of Directors