



Q1 2010 Newsletter

March 24, 2010

Entering into the 2010 legislative session it was clear that the budget outlook was not good for the Commonwealth. *Virginiaforever* worked to make the case that natural resources funding should not bear an unfair share of cuts.

Just after the November elections, *Virginiaforever* made that argument to Governor-elect McDonnell. We continued to make the case for funding for land and water throughout the legislative session as we met with legislators and Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech and wrote letters to budget conferees.

While we did see cuts to natural resources funding, our priorities were not hit as hard as we feared. The compromise crafted by the budget conferees passed the House 73-23 and the Senate 34-6.

Land

The Virginia Land Conservation Foundation was funded at a level halfway between the House and Senate proposals: \$1 million for the biennium. Farmland preservation was funded at a level of \$100,000.

Water

Funding for the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) was reduced by \$6.2 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (nonpoint source) and by \$3.6 million for the Department of Environmental Quality (point sources). This is an over all reduction of \$9.8 million for the WQIF. While the reductions could have been even more significant, these cuts will have a major impact on Virginia's ability to meet its Chesapeake Bay goals.

A bright spot in the budget is funding for agricultural best management practices (BMP) with the approval of \$9.1 million that will be generated by a \$10 increase on the existing deed recordation fee.

Going Forward

Virginia*forever* will be contacting the Governor's office to encourage the Administration to maintain the funding levels in the approved budget bill. We will also continue to support Governor McDonnell in his efforts to preserve another 400,000 acres of open space.

Thank you for all that you do to support funding for the protection and preservation of our natural resources.

On behalf of the Board of Virginia*forever*, I remain,

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert L. Dunn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "R" and "D".

Robert L. Dunn
Chairman