

Fairfax County Small Business Commission
Small Business: Legislative and Policy News
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Virginia expanding its relationship with small businesses

Since January of 2014, state and local governments have provided over \$500 million to Virginia small businesses. According to an Augusta Free Press article, since Governor Terry McAuliffe (D) took office in January of 2014, more than \$695 million in additional purchase orders have been allocated to Virginia-based businesses that registered with eVA, Virginia's online marketplace for businesses to provide goods and services to state and local government bodies.

"One of my priorities in the new Virginia economy was the promotion of a diverse and vibrant private sector, particularly among our homegrown businesses and small, traditionally disadvantaged companies," stated Governor McAuliffe.

According to the Augusta Free Press, much of this success can be traced to the Governor's signing of Executive Order Twenty (20) in July of 2014, an initiative to expand contracting opportunities for small businesses in Virginia. A key provision of the Executive Order included a directive to various agencies to include small businesses in at least 42% of contracting opportunities, the highest such goal in Virginia's history.

Chris Beschler, the director of the Department of General Services, agreed with the Governor's assessment. Beschler stated, "Through eVA's transparency features, anyone can see past, current and future purchases, as well as detailed order and contract information." Virginia has maintained its reputation as an excellent state for small businesses, placing sixth in Forbes' 2016 list of the best states for business.

<http://augustafreepress.com/virginia-business-small-business/>

Tech companies weigh in on potential Net Neutrality repeal

On July 12, 2017 in San Francisco, California, internet companies of all sizes joined together for an online protest to preserve Net Neutrality. According to a WSLs news article, this was part of a coordinated "Day of Action" aimed at convincing the Federal Communications Commission to preserve existing Net Neutrality regulations, which prevent internet providers from accelerating the connection to certain websites that choose to pay for the service.

In the past, larger companies have spearheaded the movement in favor of Net Neutrality, but in San Francisco, small businesses have been at the forefront of the movement. Many small businesses contend that they would be negatively impacted by a tiered system that permits companies to pay providers for faster service. "Small businesses, startups, and creative online projects are the most likely to be censored, stuck in a slow lane, or shaken down for extra fees by cable companies. It makes perfect sense that they are the ones leading this charge," indicated Fight the Future's campaign director Evan Greer.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, appointed as Chairman by President Trump in January, expressed that repealing the current net neutrality rules will benefit businesses of all sizes by leading to more technological innovation. Mr. Greer disagrees, stating that the existing rules protect the internet as an open platform. He insisted, "It underscores the very reason we need net neutrality protections: to make sure that the largest companies aren't able to stifle smaller up and comers and stamp out innovation and diversity of opinion online."

<http://www.wsls.com/money/tech-companies-go-big-and-small-for-net-neutrality-protest>