

**Items from the 2020 Fairfax County Legislative Program
Enacted by the 2020 General Assembly
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' Legislative Committee
September 22, 2020**

The 2020 General Assembly (GA) was particularly noteworthy for local governments. A substantial number of local priorities, including many items that have been included in Fairfax County's legislative program for years (even decades), were enacted.

Funding Core Services – Regional Transportation Funding

- *Regional Transportation Funding* – Omnibus transportation legislation includes a partial restoration of regional funding, providing \$50 million annually to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority. (HB 1414 (Filler-Corn)/SB 890 (Saslaw))

Governance – Local Authority

- *Equal Taxing Authority* – A long-standing priority for counties, the legislation provides additional authority to counties to collect taxes on meals, transient occupancy, cigarettes, and admissions. The law took effect July 1, 2020, although the provisions governing transient occupancy taxes are effective May 1, 2021, and the provisions dealing with cigarette taxes are effective July 1, 2021. (HB 785 (Watts)/SB 588 (Hanger))

Environment

- *Global Climate Change/Environmental Sustainability Initiatives* – The Virginia Clean Economy Act puts the state on a path to 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2045, sets targets for substantial investments in energy efficiency, brings Virginia into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and requires that Dominion Virginia and Appalachian Power Company supply 30 percent of their power from renewables by 2030. Additionally, solar freedom legislation will allow the County to move forward with a large solar array on the closed I-95 landfill site, crediting excess generation from that facility to other County electricity accounts serviced by the same incumbent electricity provider. (HB 1526 (Sullivan)/SB 851 (McClellan) – Virginia Clean Economy Act, HB 572 (Keam)/SB 710 (McClellan)/HB 1184 (Lopez) – solar freedom)
- *Plastic Bags* – Establishes a local option system, allowing localities to impose a five-cent tax on each plastic bag to be used by the locality for environmental cleanup, environmental education, or providing reusable bags to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) benefits. Localities are authorized to begin imposing the tax on January 1, 2021. (HB 534 (Carr)/SB 11 (Ebbin))

General Laws

- *Elections* – Expands no-excuse absentee voting to the entire 45-day absentee voting period, including both in-person and by-mail voting. (HB 1 (Herring)/SB 111 (Howell))

- *Housing* – Prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of source of income. (*HB 6 (Bourne)*)
- *Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity* – Prohibits discrimination in public accommodations and employment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. (*SB 868 (Ebbin), County initiative*)

Public Safety

- *Firearms* – The GA enacted a number of measures, including those requiring background checks for any firearm sale, allowing for “extreme risk protective orders,” banning bump stocks, limiting child access to firearms, restoring Virginia’s “one-gun-a-month” law, and granting localities authority to regulate firearms in government buildings, parks, recreation centers, and at permitted events. (*HB 2 (Plum)/SB 70 (Lucas) – background checks, HB 674 (Sullivan)/SB 240 (Barker) – extreme risk protective orders, SB 14 (Saslaw) – bump stocks, HB 1083 (Hayes) – child access, HB 812 (Ward)/SB 69 (Locke) – “one-gun-a-month” law, and HB 421 (Price)/SB 35 (Surovell) – local authority*)
- *First Responders and Mental Health* – Establishes post-traumatic stress disorder as a presumptive illness under the Virginia Workers’ Compensation Act. (*HB 438 (Heretick) and SB 561 (Vogel)*)
- *Police Officers Retirement System (PORS)* – Two County initiatives make changes to PORS. The first adds a third active police officer member to the PORS Board of Trustees, and the second authorizes a PORS member to purchase membership service credit for service rendered while a member of another Fairfax County retirement system. (*SB 651 (Boysko) and SB 652 (Boysko)*)

Transportation

- *Driving Safety* – Authorizes the issuance of new driver privilege cards to applicants that had reported income and deductions from Virginia sources and were not in violation of insurance requirements. (*HB 1211 (Tran)/SB 34 (Surovell)*)
- *Pedestrian Safety* – Provides that requirements for vehicle drivers to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians compel the driver to stop at: clearly marked crosswalks; any regular pedestrian crossing; or, any intersection when the driver is approaching on a highway where the maximum speed limit is not more than 35 miles per hour. It also prohibits the driver of a vehicle from overtaking and passing a vehicle stopped at a marked crosswalk to permit a pedestrian to cross the highway. (*HB 1705 (Kory)*)