



WILLIAM J. HOWELL
SPEAKER

TWENTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
RULES (CHAIRMAN)

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Statement of Speaker William J. Howell

-- on Republican Environmental Stewardship in Virginia on Earth Day 2009 --

RICHMOND, VA – Highlighting the numerous accomplishments of Virginia Republicans to encourage a healthy and sustainable environment, Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R-Stafford) today issued the following statement on tomorrow’s observance of Earth Day.

“Virginia is blessed with an abundance of natural resources – scenic landscapes, historic treasures, graceful waterways, popular outdoor recreational areas and so much more. On Earth Day 2009, I believe it is worthwhile to remember that Virginians are united by and share the same ultimate goal and responsibility – safeguarding, protecting and enhancing our air, water, open spaces and historic resources for the inspiration, education, use and enjoyment of our families, tourists and future generations.

“Throughout this decade, House Republicans have been responsible stewards and active leaders working to preserve our environment and ensure Virginia remains a beautiful place now and for years to come.

“For example, by putting free market tools to use through our innovative land conservation tax credit, Virginia has been able preserve over 420,000 acres for future generations to enjoy. Combined with our long-term commitment to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay through agricultural best management practices and upgrades to our wastewater treatment facilities, saving our historic Civil War battlefields, reducing emissions into our air and promoting renewable energy development, exploration and use, Virginia Republicans have continually been at the forefront offering practical solutions to Virginia’s environmental challenges. In the 2009 Session, we successfully advanced a wide-range of initiatives aimed at sustaining and improving our natural resources, including nutrient offsets exchanges, septic system clean-up and energy conservation programs.

“As Virginians across the Commonwealth celebrate Earth Day this year, we must continue to look forward to ways in which individuals, communities, businesses and government can ensure the lasting health and splendor of the natural treasurers to which we are entrusted. Republicans have been and remain resolved to advance new and creative ideas that yield long-term positive results for Virginia’s environment.”

Speaker Howell patroned [House Bill 1322](#) in the 2002 General Assembly session that applied free-market principles to the land conservation tax credit, allowing the transfer of those credits. That landmark legislation has served as a national model for encouraging land preservation. Attached is a summary of other environmental legislation initiated and successfully enacted by House Republicans over the past several sessions. This list is not intended to be a complete compilation of all Republican-sponsored environmental legislation, but provides an overview of the breadth and depth of creative solutions by Republicans to meet Virginia’s environmental challenges.

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– FACT SHEET –

VIRGINIA REPUBLICANS ARE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

- **Preserving and Protecting the Chesapeake Bay** – [HB 1150](#) (2006) [HB 1650](#) & [HB 1710](#) (2007)
 - Continued effort to fulfill House Republican’s commitment to dedicate more than \$500 million to protect and preserve the Chesapeake Bay before 2015 through water treatment plant upgrades and nutrient removal coupled with oversight and performance measures.
 - By upgrading sewage treatment plants in the Bay watershed with nutrient removal technology, Virginia can achieve approximately 20% of necessary pollution load reductions.
- **Advancing Innovative Financing for Land Conservation** – [HB 2694](#) & [HB 2825](#) (2007)
 - Expanded the financial tools available to fund land conservation and preservation projects and programs throughout the Commonwealth through an innovative Land Conservation Tax Credit.
 - Over 420,000 acres of Virginia’s most pristine land has been protected from sprawl and development since 2000 using the market-based land conservation tax credit program, according data compiled by the VA Department of Taxation.
- **Creating a Natural Resources Commitment Fund** – [HB 1335](#) & [HB 30](#) (2008), [HB 2351](#) (2009)
 - Established and provided \$20 million for cost-sharing programs to implement agricultural best management practices through the Natural Resources Commitment Fund.
 - Best management practices are important tools in controlling non-point source pollution – like animal waste, cropland, and forested land – and environmental contamination.
- **Preserving Civil War Battlefields across Virginia** – [HB 30](#) (2008)
 - Provided over \$5 million for matching grants and \$30 million in bonds for land acquisition of open space and preservation of endangered Civil War historic sites.
 - Allows for land acquisition for conservation, open space and historic preservation as well as matching grants in partnership with private non-profit organizations for battlefield sites.
- **Encouraging Energy Conservation** – [HB 2531](#) (2009)
 - Encourages energy conservation, effective July 1, 2009, by examining development of energy conservation and efficiency targets that can be accomplished by cost-effective demand-side management.
 - Helps Virginia conserve 10% or more of its electricity consumption in future years and keep prices competitive through reduced demand and improved efficiency.
- **Improving Air Quality** – [HB 1055](#) (2006)
 - Adopted stronger air emissions’ regulations (so-called “Smokestack Bill”) to provide further controls to protect Virginia’s pristine environment.
 - Cutting smokestack emissions from power plants will save lives, spare asthma sufferers, help clean up the Chesapeake Bay and protect wildlife.
- **Reducing Water Pollution** – [HB 2168](#) (2009)
 - Improves the ability to clean up Virginia’s waterways from storm-water nonpoint pollution through a nutrient offset program that allows compliance through offsets in the same tributary.
 - Addressing water quality impairments caused by agricultural and land development activities through a proven free market approach reduces pollution run-off into Virginia’s waterways.
- **Partnering to Eliminate Environmental Threats** – [HB 2646](#) (2009)
 - Establishes a market-based betterment loan program to address failing sewage systems in order to reduce threats to public health and ground and surface waters.
 - Assisting homeowners’ and businesses’ efforts to eliminate their negative impacts on Virginia’s waters through private financing of system upgrades and improvements.