

George Washington Regional Commission CAO's
2017 General Assembly Highlights
June 2, 2017

HB 1697-Danny Marshall/Extension of approvals to address the housing crisis. The bill passed, but we can consider this a small “win” for us. The extension is from 2017 to 2020 versus the introduced bill which would have been to 2022. We would like input from local staff on the problems that have been caused by these extension, such as unfinished subdivision roads not being taken into the state system, so we can begin laying the ground work to prevent further extensions (in the 2018 or 2019 session). It would also be helpful to track building permit activity over time to determine if housing starts are depressed or not.

HB 1774 – Keith Hodges/Stormwater management; work group to examine ways to address the impact of the “donut hole” of SW admin for small rural localities under the CBPA. **Implementation of new VSMP regs delayed by 1 year.**

HB 1776 – Greg Habeeb/Utility Facilities Act; associated facilities of an electrical transmission line. Although the Governor was asked for an amendment to limit its impact to SW Va., he signed it as passed. It becomes effective July 1. **Do we want to come back in with a bill in 2018 along the lines of the changes we had hoped the Governor would make?**

SB 1343 – Scott Surovell/Guardian ad litem; reimbursement for cost. **This was a win. Now excludes Social Services.**

HB 2108 – Kathy Byron/Virginia Wireless Services. This **Bill made innocuous --- However, in tandem with the Wireless Infrastructure bill (SB1282 below) ---- this was the industry's attempt to have their way with local government.**

SB 1282 – McDougale/Wireless communication infrastructure; procedure for approval by localities. **The Industry used local governments' concern about HB 2108 (above) to divide resources as a means of advancing this bill. Amended to not include new large towers in the streamlined review/approval process that was mandated for small cell facilities. BUT VACo/VML forced to agree to reexamine that issue in a GA appointed work group meeting this summer. A large tower bill in some form will be back in 2018.**

HB 2145 – James LeMunyon/DPOR; regulation of land surveyor photogrammetrists. **This bill will likely return in the 2018 session and represents burdensome regulation on local government GIS staff.**

SB 795 – Glenn Sturtevant/Register of funds expended; required posting by localities and school divisions on public gov't website. **This bill was “killed” again this year but it will return. The call for greater transparency is not going away. Suggest that a way be found to accomplish the most rudimentary of reporting “checkbook register.” Exemptions must be carved out.**

SB 962 – Emmett Hanger/Sales and use tax; nexus for out-of-state businesses. **Would like to know if you see any impacts on local revenue.**

SB 1578 – Tommy Norment/Short-term rental of property; registration of persons operating property for rental. **Fair to say that the as-passed bill was clearly favorable to local governments and the hospitality industry. VACo/VML has put together some guiding principles to be helpful to local governments as they create/amend local ordinances.**

Local Fiscal Stress - while Senator Emmett Hanger's resolution calling for an legislative study of local government fiscal stress did not make it through, there was language imbedded in the state budget dealing with local government fiscal stress that creates a joint subcommittee of the money committees to look at 1) savings opportunities from increased regional cooperation and consolidation of services; 2) local responsibilities for service delivery of state-mandated or high priority programs; 3) causes of local fiscal stress among local governments, potential financial incentives & other governmental reforms to encourage increased regional cooperation; and 4) the different taxing authorities of cities and counties.

SB 1491 – Richard Stuart/Agritourism activity; definition to include rental of a single-family residence. **This one may be back**

Lastly, budget language calls for a study of farm winery – Budget language calls on the Office of Secretary of Agriculture/Forestry to examine regulations related to noise, traffic and the viability of the farm winery industry. The Secretary's office has a call for proposals out to four universities for them to coordinate meeting/facilitation and information gathering/data collection. They hope to line that up in May, then schedule regional meetings in the June-August timeframe. Anticipating there will be regional meetings, perhaps two per location, that will allow voices of vineyard/winery owners to be heard separately from elected officials/concerned citizens. The number/location of meetings is TBD, depending on what they think is needed to best accommodate participation. Report due November 30.