

Office of Sustainability: Legislative Updates February 2025

1 SUSTAINABILITY INPUT AND FINAL 2025 PWC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

November 2020: The Prince William County (PWC) Board of County Supervisors adopted Climate Mitigation & Resiliency Goals:



Reduce county-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030



Procure 100% renewable electricity county-wide by 2035.



Procure 100% renewable electricity for county government operations by 2030.



Achieve carbon neutrality for county government operations by 2050.



Become a Climate Ready Region by 2030.

October 2023: The Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan (CESMP) was published and listed several opportunities to advocate for sustainability at the local, state, and federal levels. Advocacy is important because the county government cannot directly control or influence many community-wide emissions sources or assets; therefore, the ability to meet the 2030 emissions reduction goal and 2030 Climate-Ready Region goal may rely on significant external support from market forces, public and private entities, and state and national-level regulation.

July 2024: The Office of Sustainability and Sustainability Commission submitted recommendations to the Office of Communications for legislative agenda items to include in PWC’s 2025 Legislative Agenda.

November 2024: The PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda was approved by the Board.

December 2024: The Final PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda was amended to include recommendations from the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) Data Center Report.

The following sections summarize the input provided by the Office of Sustainability and Sustainability Commission and the sustainability-related items in the Final PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda.

1.1 Advocacy Efforts Described in the CESMP

Sector	Opportunities for External Advocacy and Action
Buildings	Advocate for a low-carbon building code/more aspirational codes and vote on energy code updates
	Advocate for quicker adoption of the most recent International Energy Conservation Code in Virginia
	Encourage adaptation planning for private businesses by providing examples of adaptation plans for our county’s critical facilities

Sector	Opportunities for External Advocacy and Action
Electricity	Advocate for a more aggressive state-wide Renewable Portfolio Standard
	Advocate for policies to help overcome barriers to community choice aggregation program adoption in Virginia
	Work with Dominion and NOVEC to develop electrification incentives and promote expansion of electrical infrastructure to accommodate growing building and vehicle electrification
	Work with Dominion and NOVEC to promote grid resiliency through actions such as microgrid development or undergrounding of power wires
Transportation	Work with Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission to advocate for transit service expansion and fleet electrification
	Advocate for more state and national incentives and mandates for purchasing EVs
Waste	Advocate for the expansion of Balls Ford Road Compost Facility to accept more food waste
	Advocate for high-efficiency wastewater treatment processes and state-wide programs aimed at helping local wastewater treatment facilities in their decarbonization efforts
Land Use	Advocate for a stronger state tree preservation requirement program through State Code

1.2 Office of Sustainability Recommendations for the PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda Submitted in July 2024

- Advocate for a low-carbon building code/more aspirational codes and vote on energy code updates.
- Advocate for a study on the barriers to community choice aggregation program adoption in Virginia.
- Advocate for state electrification incentives for utilities and the expansion of electrical infrastructure to accommodate growing building and vehicle electrification. Additionally, remove barriers to solar installation such as the Dominion Solar Interconnection Fees for mid-sized projects.

1.3 Sustainability Commission Recommendations for the PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda Submitted in July 2024

- Municipal aggregation: study of barriers and how to lower them
- Data centers: conditioning the VA sales and use tax exemption on use of >90% clean power (i.e., zero-carbon electricity)
- Data centers: requiring impact studies (including GHG and energy impacts) prior to siting new facilities
- Data centers: authorizing counties to tax energy-intensive facilities based on their use of clean power or carbon footprint (more clean power = lower tax)
- Rejoining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

- Committing to clean car standards
- Clarifying policy for cost allocation for grid expansion -- costs should be allocated to customers primarily responsible for creating the need for improvements

1.4 Sustainability-Related Items in the *Final PWC 2025 Legislative Agenda*

Prince William County will monitor and report on legislation affecting environmental stewardship, including issues surrounding water quality, including the impact of PFAS, salinity, and microplastics, in addition to those issues contained in the Virginia Association of Counties environment, energy and land use platform.

In addition, the county supports the following in order to meet the goals as identified in the county's Community Energy and Sustainability Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plan:

- Advocating for a low-carbon building code/more aspirational codes and vote on energy code updates.
- Advocating for a study on the barriers to community choice aggregation program adoption in Virginia.
- Advocating for state electrification incentives for utilities and the expansion of electrical infrastructure to accommodate growing building and vehicle electrification; and removing barriers to solar installation such as the Dominion Solar Interconnection Fees for mid-sized projects.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY SUPPORTS: Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission Study Prince William County supports findings from the December 2024 Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) study which recommends legislation that would:

- Expressly authorize local governments to require and consider water use estimates for proposed data center developments;
- Expressly authorize local governments to require sound modeling studies for proposed data center developments;
- Expressly authorize local governments to establish and enforce maximum allowable sound levels for operational data center facilities using alternative low frequency metrics and zoning ordinances; and
- Expressly authorize local governments to require and consider power load demand estimates for proposed data center developments.

In addition, the county supports legislation which seeks to protect utility ratepayers from bearing the costs of infrastructure needs driven solely by the data center industry, as well as, address the risk of generation and transmission infrastructure costs being stranded with existing customers.

2.0 BILLS PASSED AS OF 02/24/2025

All bills passed by the House and Senate are still subject to review by the Governor. March 24, 2025 is the last day for the Governor to take action on legislation. The Governor can choose to sign a bill, veto a bill, or return a bill with amendments. During Virginia’s reconvened session on April 2, 2025, legislators will meet again to deliberate on amendments and vetoes. July 1, 2025 is the effective date of enacted legislation.

Data Centers

Data Center Bills	Water Use	Granting Local Authority or Requiring Local Action	Fair Cost Allocation and Utility Rate Structure	Noise	Energy Use
HB1601: Siting of data centers; site assessment; high energy use facility.	X	X		X	X
SB1449: Data centers; site assessment for high energy use facility.	X	X		X	X
HB2084: Public utilities certain; SCC shall determine if using reasonable classifications of customers.			X		
HB2663: Electricity consumption tax; rate adjustments.			X		

Energy and Utilities

- HB2266: State Corporation Commission; distribution cost sharing program, distribution system upgrades.
- HB1779: Carbon-free energy or clean energy; definition of fusion energy.
- HB1822: Electric utilities; construction of electrical transmission lines, advanced conductors.
- HB2426: Small renewable energy projects; amends definition, permit by rule.
- SB1047: Electric utilities; demand response programs for certain customers.
- SB1336: Electricity consumption tax; rate adjustments.
- SB1338: Carbon-free energy or clean energy; definition of fusion energy.
- SB1342: Low income households; Dept. of Energy to identify barriers to reducing energy-related costs.

Energy Efficiency

- HB1935: Income Qualified Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force; established, report.
- HB2744: Electric utilities; energy efficiency upgrades, report.

- SB777: Department of Housing and Community Development; Low-Income Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force established; report.

Energy Storage

- HB2537: Energy storage requirements; Department of Energy, et al., to develop model ordinances, reports. / SB1394: Energy storage requirements; Department of Energy, et al., to develop model ordinances, reports.

Environmental Justice

- SB1254: Comprehensive plan; environmental justice strategy.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

- HB1791: Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Program and Fund created.
- HB2087: Electric utilities; electric vehicle charging stations, transportation electrification.

Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Changes

- HB2413: Electric utilities; integrated resource plans. / SB1021: Electric utilities; integrated resource plans.

Interconnection Fees - Schools

- SB1058: Net energy metering; interconnection costs for public schools.
- HB2113: Solar Interconnection Grant Fund and Program; established, sunset, report.

Natural Resources

- HB1941: Invasive plant species; retail sales.
- HB2630: Trees; replacement during development process in localities, tree canopy fund.
- HB2638: Trees; conservation and replacement during development process.
- SB1166: Invasive plant species; retail sales.

Plastic Bags

- HB1764: Disposable plastic bag tax; distribution to towns.

Promoting Clean Energy Efforts

- HB1819: Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE); changes to financing program, definitions.
- HB1616: Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program and Fund; established, report, sunset.
- HB1821: Electric utilities; accelerated renewable energy buyers, zero-carbon electricity.

Restoration

- HB1948: Abandoned Mine Land Grant Retention Fund established.

Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Changes

- HB1883: Electric utilities; renewable energy portfolio standard program requirements; power purchase agreements. / SB1040: Electric utilities; renewable energy portfolio standard program requirements.

- HB1934: Electric utilities; generation of electricity from renewable and zero carbon sources.
- HB2356: Prevailing wage rate; apprenticeship requirements.
- SB1316: Renewable energy portfolio standard eligible sources; geothermal resources.
- SB853: Prevailing wage rate; apprenticeship requirements, RPS-eligible source work, penalties.
- SB893: Renewable energy portfolio standard program; geothermal heating and cooling systems, report.

Social Determinants of Health

- HB1827: Comprehensive plan; social determinants of health.

Solar

- HB2090: Multi-family shared solar program; amends requirements for a shared facility, etc.
- HB2037: Land development; solar canopies in parking areas.

Transportation

- SB1317: Transportation district commissions; contracts or agreements.

Utility Regulation

- HB2136: Public Utility Ombudsman, Office of the; established.
- SB823: Electric utilities; construction of renewable energy facilities.

Virtual Power Plant

- HB2346: Electric utilities; virtual power plant pilot program. / SB1100: Electric utilities; virtual power plant pilot program.