

REPORT ON  
THE FEASIBILITY OF  
A VIRGINIA LIAISON OFFICE  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.  
TO  
THE GOVERNOR  
AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 2

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
Department of Purchases and Supply  
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# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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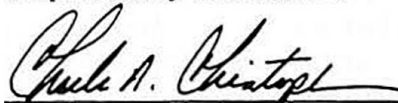
September 1, 1977

TO: The Honorable Mills E. Godwin, Jr.  
Governor of Virginia  
and  
Members of the General Assembly of Virginia

In accordance with House Joint Resolution No. 193, I am pleased to transmit a report on the feasibility of establishing a State Liaison Office in Washington, D. C. The report, after careful analysis, concludes that the Commonwealth can derive substantial benefit from a Washington Office and recommends the establishment of a small office located organizationally within the Office of the Governor.

We are pleased to submit this report for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Charles A. Christophersen

## INTRODUCTION

In 1977, the Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 193 directing the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (DIA) to study and make recommendations regarding the establishment of a State liaison office in Washington, D.C. The Department was directed to submit its findings to the Governor and appropriate committees of the General Assembly no later than September 1, 1977. HJR No. 193 states that:

WHEREAS, in recent years there has been considerable serious discussion at both the state and federal levels of government about the need for governmental reorganization of departments, consolidation of functions, and development of more responsive cost-effective units of government; and

WHEREAS, while accepting increased federal activity in areas formerly the exclusive province of the states, governors and state legislatures have attempted to fit federally-aided programs into the total state administrative and financial package; and

WHEREAS, the increasingly complex responsibilities of state government and the continuing growth of federal assistance programs have created a need for early involvement of the states in federal spending and policy decisions; and

WHEREAS, it is not only practical but also necessary for the states to "open a window" on Washington so as to keep themselves better in touch with developments at the federal level and, more importantly, to insure that federal programs are not developed in a vacuum, devoid of information about the impact of those programs upon state and local government; and

WHEREAS, it is feasible for states to establish their own legislative "tracking systems" which can provide procedures for obtaining information on proposed federal legislation and permitting assessments as to the impact of such proposed legislation upon each state, thus permitting each state to formulate an appropriate response, and coordinate its response with those of other states in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, state agencies should possess a greater voice in the federal decision-making process by providing information on federal bills which would affect state agency operations and by coordinating the development of state agency position papers for the Governors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs is hereby requested to prepare a report on procedures and costs for establishing, in the Office of Governor, a Commonwealth Liaison Office in Washington, D.C.; and be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the report of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, together with recommendations re-

garding the structure, costs and organization of such Commonwealth Liaison Office, be presented to the Governor and the Appropriate Committees of the General Assembly no later than September one, nineteen hundred seventy-seven.

This report, prepared in compliance with the above, brings together the results of a detailed investigation by DIA. It analyzes the need for a Washington office and examines the benefits which would accrue to Virginia if the Commonwealth established such an office. Finally, recommendations are made regarding the establishment of a Washington office most appropriate to Virginia.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMONWEALTH ESTABLISH A STATE LIAISON OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THE OFFICE SHOULD BE STAFFED BY TWO PROFESSIONALS AND SHOULD BE LODGED ORGANIZATIONALLY WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR. ITS DIRECTOR SHOULD SERVE AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR, REPORTING TO THE GOVERNOR ON MATTERS OF STATE/FEDERAL RELATIONS AND SERVING AS THE GOVERNOR'S SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON. THE WASHINGTON OFFICE SHOULD WORK CLOSELY WITH THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, WITH THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDING NECESSARY STAFF SUPPORT.

### **STUDY APPROACH**

The Division of State/Federal Relations of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs conducted a thorough investigation in the course of this study. The approach included contact with many individuals who are directly concerned, with inquiries made regarding their experiences, perceptions, or opinions about a Washington office.

#### Visits to Offices of Other States

Of the nineteen state offices similar to the type being investigated, the staff visited six. These included Washington offices of the States of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, and Texas. The directors of these offices provided many valuable insights into the operations, costs, and benefits of a Washington office. A discussion of these offices begins on page 8.

#### Interviews with Congressional Staffs

Since a key factor in the success of a Washington office is its relationship with the State's Congressional Delegation, the staff sought the views of the Virginia Delegation regarding the establishment of such an office. The staff met in Washington with the Administrative Assistants of each Congressional Delegation member and discussed such topics as the Delegation member's feelings about a Virginia office, whether the Congressional staff felt Virginia could benefit from such an office, and how the two staffs might

work together. The results of these conversations are discussed on page 13.

### Survey of State Agencies

In order to gauge the opinions of State agencies regarding a Washington office, the staff contacted eighteen agencies which are significantly impacted by federal policy. These agencies were requested to comment on such questions as whether a Washington office would benefit their operations, what functions the office should perform, and how the agency would utilize it. Agencies contacted were: Department of Planning and Budget, Division of Justice and Crime Prevention, Department of Corrections, Office of Emergency Services, State Water Control Board, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Conservation and Economic Development, Department of Highways and Transportation, Department of Education, Department of Community Colleges, Council of Higher Education, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Welfare, and Virginia Employment Commission. Agency responses are discussed on page 13.

## **VIRGINIA'S PRESENT EFFORTS**

### The Impact of Federal Policy

The growing presence of the federal government in the affairs of State and local governments is a phenomenon of great concern to State and local officials nationwide. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations reports that total federal aid to State and local governments in Fiscal Year 1977 will exceed \$72.4 billion, reflecting an increase of 22.6 percent over the previous year. Moreover, since 1960, total federal aid has increased ten times, with high and low years experienced over the entire period.

The federal presence is felt no less in the Commonwealth of Virginia than in other states nationwide. The U. S. Treasury Department publication **Federal Aid to States** indicates that total federal aid to State and local public and non-profit organizations in Virginia reached a level of 1.2 billion dollars in Fiscal Year 1976. This represents an increase of 90.4 percent over the past five years.

The increase in total dollar aid to State and local governments is a firm indicator of not only the overall presence of the federal government but of the increase in political activity, regulatory control, intergovernmental transactions, and administrative complexity which the States and localities must face in pursuing and administering federal funds. In short, federal funding has an enormous impact upon the states and this impact can be expected to grow, in spite of attempts to streamline the federal establishment through such techniques as advance funding, joint funding and block grants.

Federal aid funds are authorized and appropriated by Congress

through a long and often esoteric legislative process. Once appropriated, the bulk of the aid funds are then allocated to regions and to states by federal executive agencies. The agencies, under general guidelines from Congress, write the rules and regulations governing not only how the funds must be used and administered, but often governing a host of related affairs of the grantee as well.

The processes, legislative and executive, are not only complicated and often extended with a multitude of public hearings, but they are intrinsically political as well. As is characteristic of the American System, federal aid is appropriated amid interest group politics, whether the groups be private, public interest, separate States, regional coalitions of States, or local governments. This is especially the case where federal funds are allocated through formulas which reflect not only the needs of the client group but interest group politics as well.

As a result of this ever growing federal presence in the affairs of the states and the complexity and political nature of the federal policy making process, the states devote a considerable amount of time to following developments in Washington and attempting to impact the course of events where it is deemed desirable. The sheer size of the federal budget, the multiplicity of federal agencies, the complexity of the issues, and the many power centers and "political nuances" of Washington can make it almost mandatory that a state exert some effort at "having its eyes and ears" in Washington.

#### The Efforts of Virginia State Agencies

As was suggested above, the Commonwealth of Virginia and its local governments feel the federal impact no less than other states. Moreover, certain State agencies are impacted more than others due to the nature of their mission and level of federal funding (see page 13 for a discussion of state agencies). Such agencies are intricately tied to both Congressional Committees which authorize and appropriate funds for state programs and to their counterpart federal agencies which administer the funds. This has created many alignments reaching from the federal level to the States (and often local) which are narrow, or functional, in scope. The very life and death of many large State programs, such as are common in the areas of health, welfare, and education, depend upon federal funding. Accordingly, these agencies must stay regularly informed about the status of federal developments affecting their programs and they frequently experience the need to have a voice in the federal policy making process. In fact, some State agencies are often called upon by Virginia's Congressional Delegates, Congressional committees, or federal executive agencies to state their positions on federal policy issues, and these positions are often assumed, rightly or wrongly, to be the official position of the Governor. Issues of concern range anywhere from level of federal funding to regulations governing financial reporting.

The efforts of functionally oriented State agencies are further bolstered by their memberships in single purpose national associations. However, such associations do not always represent the true interests of a member State agency and, by nature, represent



no more than the narrow interests of their functional constituencies.

Many Virginia State agencies devote a sizeable amount of time and energy to monitoring developments in Washington. In fact, some agencies have employees who specialize in coordination with the federal government. Moreover, the existence of such diverse agency interests presents a special problem to the Commonwealth. First, as noted above, some mechanism is needed to ensure that agency positions taken on federal policy issues, whether through letters written to Congressional Delegates or appearances before Congressional or agency hearings, are consistent with overall State policies as formulated by the Governor. Second, since many federal policies affect more than one State agency, several agencies often take positions on a single policy proposal. This increases the likelihood that several agencies might work at cross purposes, that one position may contradict another, or that one agency may take a stand which is detrimental to the well being of another. The potential for these problems exists especially where an issue affects agencies aligned under more than one of the Governor's Cabinet Secretaries and therefore remains uncoordinated at the Secretarial level.

#### The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs

The Virginia Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (DIA) was created in July of 1976 by an act of the General Assembly. Located under the Secretary of Administration and Finance, the new Department serves as the State's only central staff agency for carrying out an overall program of intergovernmental relations. State Code section 2.1-414 charges the Department with, among other things:

- 1) Maintaining liaison with the Congress and monitoring the development and progress of federal legislation, advising agencies of proposed legislation, providing the Governor with summary reports on pending federal legislation including statements of potential impact on the State, and coordination of State positions on federal legislation including review of proposed testimony by State officers.
- 2) Maintaining liaison with the Executive Office of the President and appropriate executive agencies of the federal government for the purpose of keeping the Governor and State agencies informed as to federal policies, plans, programs, rules and regulations in order that the State may influence the federal government in its policies, plans, programs, rules and regulations.
- 3) Serving as the statewide clearinghouse for review of applications for donations, gifts, and grants to State agencies prior to their submission to the Governor for approval.
- 4) Identifying and disseminating information to local governments about the availability and utilization of federal and State resources.

These responsibilities are lodged within the Department's Division of State/Federal Relations which is currently staffed by eight professionals.

In accordance with the above mandates, the Division of State/Federal Relations has initiated several programs which will soon be expanded into a more comprehensive Intergovernmental Affairs program. The first program, the Federal Legislative Tracking System (FLTS), is designed to address mandate number one above. Under this program, the staff monitors and tracks the development of federal legislation of interest to the Commonwealth. Legislative proposals are tracked from early stages, throughout the Congressional legislative process, with special attention to the status of pertinent bills. The results of this tracking are compiled in a bi-monthly status report, the Federal Legislative Status Report, which is sent to all State agencies with an interest in any legislation being monitored. The status report gives a brief summary of important bills, and tells not only where a bill lies in the Congressional legislative process (e.g., hearings, mark-up, floor action, etc.) but suggests its chances for passage. The purpose of the Federal Legislative Status Report is to keep State agencies informed about the development of important bills so that an agency may respond to a proposed federal law according to its anticipated impact upon the Commonwealth. The status report is especially useful in this respect because it draws attention to bills which, if passed, will impact agencies in more than one Cabinet Secretarial area and which therefore require a coordinated response.

As an added service, the staff serves the members of the Governor's Cabinet by conducting, upon request, special analyses of issues before Congress. The staff makes frequent trips to Washington in order to attend important hearings or mark-up sessions and this enables greater insight into a particular issue under consideration.

Moreover, an important new element has been recently added to the FLTS program. By directive of the Secretary of Administration and Finance, all State agencies which intend to take a formal, written, position on proposed federal legislation must submit a copy of the communique to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs at least two days prior to sending it to Washington. All such letters are reviewed by the DIA staff to determine: 1) whether the position recommended is consistent with a position taken by another agency or has a negative impact upon another State agency; 2) whether several agencies should coordinate their positions; and 3) whether the agency's position is consistent with overall State policies formulated by the Governor. DIA will maintain a file on all such agency positions.

A second DIA program, which is in its early stages of development, is the Federal Register Tracking system. This effort follows mandate number two above. Under this program, the DIA staff reviews daily the Federal Register and composes a weekly synopsis of important proposed and final federal agency rules and regulations. The synopsis, the Federal Register Abstract, is sent to all State agencies having an interest in a rule appearing during the

preceding week. Its purpose is to alert those agencies to proposed or final rules so that the agency might make an appropriate response to the issuing federal agency. This program is in its infancy at the time of this report; however, DIA will soon expand its scope to include a more detailed analysis and coverage of proposed rules.

Efforts toward these two programs have led to a sizeable repository of information, both current and historical, on federal policy issues. For example, the staff subscribes yearly to such publications as the **Congressional Record**, the **Congressional Quarterly**, and the **Federal Register**, and has at least one copy of all important bills introduced in Congress. Information from this repository is available for use by all State agencies.

Recently, DIA has initiated a new, but similar, effort to track important federal appropriations both through Congress and through the federal agency allocation process as well. The objective of this effort will be to enhance the ability of State agencies to determine in advance the level of federal funding to be anticipated for an upcoming fiscal year and to identify sources of federal funds which are available but untapped.

Another DIA program, consistent with mandate number four above, is the Grant Availability Program. Under this program, the DIA staff serves as a statewide clearinghouse for information about the availability of federal and State assistance, both financial and technical. Accordingly, the staff serves local governments by publishing and disseminating a newsletter titled "Federal and State Aid." The newsletter, published every other month, carries articles and notices about opportunities for federal and State assistance. It is designed to alert local governments to sources of aid which are not highly publicized. "Federal and State Aid" is available for use by any State agency which might wish to publish an article informing local governments about its aid programs.

As an added service, the DIA staff aids local governments in their search for federal or State aid. At a locality's request, the staff will conduct an extensive search for all possible sources which may fund a local project.

Finally, DIA administers the Project Notification and Review System in accordance with mandate number three above. The PNRS is a coordinating mechanism under which all applications for federal assistance covered by federal circular A-95, whether originating locally or in a State agency, are reviewed at a pre-application stage. This enables a determination of whether the project to be funded is in conflict with, or is duplicative of, other programs. The system provides for a review by all interested State agencies, giving them an opportunity to comment on the proposed project. Local applications are also reviewed at the substate level by the areawide planning district commission in which an application originated.

As indicated above, DIA is actively involved in monitoring the development of federal policy, including federal legislation, regu-

lations and funding sources. Accordingly, the Department attempts to keep its "eyes and ears" on Washington from its Richmond office, traveling to the city as often as possible. While DIA has made significant strides in tracking federal developments, the Department feels that its efforts are hindered by the lack of a continuing presence in Washington. The complexity of the federal policy making process, the pervasiveness of the federal bureaucracy, and the enormous number of personalities involved in formulating and administering federal policy make a permanent presence in Washington essential for any State which intends to have a voice in the policy making process.

For example, the Commonwealth can benefit sizeably from having continued personal contact with those individuals in Congressional staffs and executive agencies who have needed information or who have the influence to assist the Commonwealth in making its voice known. Since federal policy initiatives, such as new funding programs or changes in regulations, are usually first conceived long before the public is informed, it is only through continued personal contact that a State can get the word early enough to take full advantage of federal opportunities. Stationed in Richmond, DIA cannot maintain this continual contact with the key individuals in the federal Executive and Legislative branches.

## **THE WASHINGTON OFFICE CONCEPT**

### Characteristics

At the time of this report, nineteen states have Washington offices similar to the type being investigated.\* The offices vary significantly as to their size, scope of operations, and overall philosophy. However, the many similarities and dissimilarities lead to helpful conclusions about Washington offices, as the following paragraphs discuss.

#### **Mission and Activities**

Although the amount of activities, as well as the level of involvement, varies from office to office, there are certain functions which are basic to the Washington office concept. Following is a list of typical functions:

- 1) Monitor and track the development of federal legislation which is of interest to the State.
- 2) Monitor the development of federal agency rules and regulations of interest to the State.

\*States with full Washington offices include California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

- 3) Conduct in depth analysis of federal legislation and regulations as to their impact upon the State.
- 4) Provide State agencies with up-to-date information on the status of federal legislation and regulations.
- 5) Influence the development of federal legislation by keeping the State Congressional Delegation informed about the Governor's priorities.
- 6) Influence the making of federal agency rules and regulations by keeping federal officials informed of the State's position.
- 7) Alert State agencies and local governments to early opportunities for federal grants.
- 8) Join in cooperative efforts with other States through their Washington offices on issues of mutual concern.
- 9) Maintain personal contacts with Congressional staff people, key federal agency officials, and public interest groups, etc.
- 10) Write, or advise upon, testimony to be presented by the Governor or State agency heads before Congressional committees.
- 11) Assist State agency officials in resolving administrative problems which occur between the State and federal agencies.
- 12) Monitor and track the status of federal grant applications submitted by State agencies.
- 13) Assist State agencies in obtaining needed information from the federal government.
- 14) Serve as a base office for State officials traveling to Washington.
- 15) Arrange meetings between federal and State officials.
- 16) Serve as an information source about the State when called upon by a State Congressional Delegate's staff.
- 17) Respond to information requests by citizens of the State traveling in Washington.
- 18) Serve as "eyes and ears" for the Governor, alerting the State to anything happening in Washington which needs a State response.
- 19) Keep State officials informed as to dates of hearings and other important events.

#### Organization Within State Government

Most existing Washington offices follow one of two common organizational arrangements within their State governmental

structure. The first, and most common, pattern is location of the Washington office within the Office of the Governor. This arrangement has several advantages. First, since Washington offices are characteristically concerned with questions of state policy vis-a-vis the federal government (e.g., relations with the State Congressional Delegation and preparation of testimony for Congressional committee hearings) the office director should enjoy the status of spokesman for the Governor. Second, since the formulation of federal policy is of great concern to the affairs of the Governor's office, a direct communications link between the Washington office and the Governor's office is important; especially since a Washington office works closely with the Governor's national service arm, the National Governor's Conference. Finally, a Washington office should monitor the positions of all State agencies on federal legislative issues. In order to assure that State agency positions are consistent with the views of the Governor, the Washington office director should hold such position that he or she not only has the ear of the Governor, but can speak for the Governor where State agencies are concerned.

The second most common organizational pattern is where a Washington office serves as staff agency to the Governor. Under this arrangement, the office has the same status as other State staff agencies, but does not enjoy the benefits of being a part of the office of the Governor. It should be noted that this arrangement can diminish the office's effectiveness in light of the benefits discussed above.

Of the six Washington offices visited, four, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and North Carolina, are located organizationally within the Office of the Governor; one, Connecticut, operates out of the Lieutenant Governor's office but works closely with the Governor's assistants; and only one, Texas, has the lesser status of a staff agency outside of the Office of the Governor.\* The director of the New York office has been recently elevated to cabinet status, while the director of the New Jersey office, though not a cabinet member, returns home and attends all of the Governor's cabinet meetings.

#### Staffing and Staff Assignments

Since existing Washington offices vary in size (from two professionals to approximately fifteen), the approach to staff assignments also varies. However, where an office employs three or more professionals, the staff is ordinarily organized around functional areas, with individual staff members specializing in their respective areas. For instance, a staff of sufficient size will have

\* However, in the Texas State Government, only a fraction (approx. 1/3) of the State agencies are under direct control of the Governor. This increases the status of those agencies under the Governor's direction, and the Texas Washington office therefore enjoys appreciably high status within State government.

professionals specializing in such areas as community development, education, human resources, natural resources, and energy. This arrangement appears most desirable since it enables an office to have staff specialists who become experts in their fields and who are therefore more effective in dealing with complex technical issues. It enables the staff specialist to serve as a trained resource person when called upon by a State Congressional Delegation staff seeking to assess the real impact a piece of proposed legislation will have on the State, or when analyzing technical regulations proposed by a federal executive agency.

By contrast, small staffs (two people) must remain generalists and can never attain the level of specialization necessary to serve as experts on complex issues of federal policy.

#### Relationship with the Congressional Delegation

As might be expected, there is considerable variation in the relationships between the Washington offices visited and their various Congressional Delegations. For instance, the New Jersey State office considers lobbying as its proper role and, in fact, lobbies not only its own Congressional Delegation members but attempts to influence the votes of delegates from other states as well. Moreover, the director considers it her role to contact a member of Congress directly rather than limiting her contact to Congressional staffs.

By contrast, the Texas office claims to abstain from lobbying altogether because the State appropriations act prohibits use of State funds for influencing the development of legislation. In effect, the activities of the Texas office appear to be confined to low keyed sharing of information with delegation staffs and provision of technical aid in drafting and analyzing legislative proposals, rather than such activities as contacting key committee members before an important vote, or cornering influential persons in hallways.

However, regardless of the philosophy of the office, all offices seek a good rapport with their Congressional Delegations and their staffs. This is indeed a key to their success, for any attempt by the State to influence the development of federal laws would depend upon the support of its own Delegation. Moreover, Washington offices appear to aid their Delegation not only by providing technical expertise, but by handling certain casework for a particular Delegate when response by a State agency back home is needed.

In short, the presence of a Washington office can lead to greater communication between a State's Congressional Delegation and the State government. It facilitates relationships and creates opportunities for mutual cooperation which otherwise might not exist.

#### Relationship with State Agencies

Relationships with State agencies is another important factor in the success of a Washington office. All of the offices visited serve, to varying degrees, as "eyes and ears" for the Governor and State agencies. It is common practice to have contacts in the major State agencies and to serve as an information link between those

agencies and the federal establishment. Some of the offices work with State agencies to develop periodical analyses of federal legislative proposals which are of priority to the agencies. These analyses are sent to the State's Congressional Delegation for reference.

### Collective Pursuits

An important feature of the Washington office concept is the opportunity which the States have for collective action. By having offices in Washington, the States enjoy an added opportunity for mutual information sharing, joint positions on federal policy issues, and the surfacing of avenues for cooperative effort. This opportunity arises because of the continuous contact the States have with each other through their Washington offices. While the above is true on the national basis, it is more often the case where regional interests are concerned. States in one region tend to join together as coalitions, such as the Coalition of Northeast States, to promote their regional interests.

Accordingly, the National Governor's Conference, which takes a strong interest in promoting the Washington office concept, makes a special effort toward both assisting the Washington offices and ensuring interoffice communication on a regular basis. One such effort is through the Hall of the States. The Hall of the States is a new office building located on North Capitol Street a few blocks from the Capitol. The National Governor's Conference, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Council of State Governments lease the building as a joint venture and sublease its space exclusively for State offices and offices of State executive branch associations. Included are central service facilities available to all tenants. At the time of this report, the Hall of the States houses offices of such national organizations as the National Governor's Conference, the Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Planning Agencies, the National Association of State Budget Officers, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Association of Attorneys General, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, as well as the Washington offices of fourteen States.

Many State offices not currently located in the Hall of the States consider it an ideal location and plan to move into the new quarters at a future date. Not only does the close proximity to the Capitol greatly facilitate access to Congressional activities, but residing together in their own building gives the States a sense of camaraderie and fosters mutual informal sharing, shared assistance, and joint endeavors. Moreover, the available central services, such as the common library, print shop, and mailing list can reduce overhead costs.

Another related effort of the National Governor's Conference is a weekly meeting, held every Monday morning, in which the directors of all the State offices join with the NGC staff to discuss issues of mutual concern. These meetings are an ideal means of fostering interoffice communication and multi-state support for important issues impacting the States.



## Reactions to a Virginia Office

### Reactions of the Virginia Congressional Delegation

As noted earlier, the staff contacted the office of each of Virginia's ten House Representatives and two Senators to determine their attitudes regarding a Virginia Washington Office. The discussions were held with each Delegate's Administrative Assistant, since this assistant is usually closest to the Delegate. The consensus of the Assistants, speaking for their Congressmen, was in support of a Washington office with a willingness, or desire, to work with its staff.

As might be expected, however, the degree of support varied among those interviewed, with some expressing strong support for a Virginia office and other supporting with reservations. One of the primary suggestions was that the member of Congress would expect an objective presentation of the State's positions on legislative issues from the Governor and his agencies. Moreover, several of the assistants noted that their Congressmen would continue to vote according to the interests of their constituencies even though the Commonwealth might take a contrary position.

### State Agency Reactions

As previously mentioned, the staff contacted those State agencies which are most impacted by federal developments and requested their comments as to whether a Washington office would benefit their operations (see page 3 for a list of agencies contacted.) Of the eighteen agencies contacted, thirteen responded, with eight indicating that they see little or no benefit in a Washington office and the remaining five reporting that an office would be beneficial.

Of the several reasons voiced in opposition to a Washington office, two were most common. First, five agencies noted that they already maintain ongoing contacts with federal agencies which administer State programs. Therefore, they felt they have a direct and early access to Washington on those programs which are most important to them. They feared a Washington office might duplicate those relations and, in effect, circumvent existing channels of communication.

A second frequently cited objection was that the State agency utilizes the services of national associations, such as health and agriculture associations, which serve the specialized functional interests of the agency. Four State agencies felt that these associations meet their needs both for monitoring federal policy development and for impacting the policy making process (see page 17 for a discussion of national associations.)

### Local Government Reactions

In July, 1977, the idea of a Washington office was discussed by the Governor's Local Government Advisory Council. The Council is composed of twenty-two local elected officials from jurisdictions across the State as well as the executive directors of the Virginia Municipal League and the Virginia Association of Counties. It was created in order to make recommendations to the Governor on

matters of State-local relations. The local representatives passed a unanimous resolution endorsing in principle the establishment of a Virginia Washington Office. This resolution states that:

Whereas, in recent years there has been considerable serious discussion at all levels of government about the need for governmental reorganization of departments, consolidation of functions, and development of more responsive cost-effective units of government; and

Whereas, the increasing complex responsibilities of state and local government and the continuing growth of federal assistance programs have created a need for early involvement of the Commonwealth in federal spending and policy decisions, and subsequently developing rules and regulations; and

Whereas, it is not only practical but also necessary for the Commonwealth to "open a window" on Washington so as to keep better in touch with developments at the federal level and, more importantly, to ensure that federal programs are not developed in a vacuum, devoid of information about the impact of those programs upon state and local governments; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Local Government Advisory Council that the Governor of Virginia be urged to adopt in principle the establishment of a Commonwealth Liaison Office in Washington, D.C.

## **ANALYSIS**

### Accepted Principles

From the foregoing observations, a number of principles can be drawn regarding Washington offices. The following principles are important for a Virginia office and are treated as assumptions for the remainder of this study:

- 1) For greatest success, a Washington office must have full support of the Governor and its director must be able to speak for the Governor on policy questions.
- 2) A Washington office must maintain a "low profile" in Washington, supplying the State's Congressional Delegation with objective facts on policy questions.
- 3) Success is strongly linked to credibility and the staff's reputation for its technical ability.
- 4) Although many of the benefits of a Washington office can be realized in its early stages of operation, it will take at least two years for the office to reach its maximum potential.
- 5) Any permanent Washington office should be located in the Hall of the States.

## The Options

The research on Washington offices disclosed numerous optional types of offices which are available to the states. The options vary as to size, scope of effort, and philosophy of operation. Several of the possible alternatives are not listed because they are of doubtful benefit to the Commonwealth. For instance, Virginia could hire a consultant in Washington to serve some of the desired functions. However, this would add little to the Commonwealth's present efforts and would fail to achieve some of the most important benefits of a Washington office. Therefore, the options which would follow are those considered to be the only appropriate courses for Commonwealth:

- Option No. 1 — Remain as is, without a Washington office, utilizing the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs to carry on its program from Richmond.
- Option No. 2 — Establish a part-time office staffed by no more than two professionals no more than three days per week.
- Option No. 3 — Establish a full-time Washington office of no more than two professionals.
- Option No. 4 — Establish a full-time Washington office with from five to six professionals.

## Possible Benefits

Both research for this study and actual experiences of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs uncover a number of benefits which can accrue to Virginia if the Commonwealth established some form of Washington office. These are as follows:

- 1) First hand, on the scene, monitoring of the development of federal legislation and regulations to enable Virginia to impact the federal policy process at early stages.
- 2) Increased ability to know where the many less visible sources of federal funds are administered and who to contact, and to have an early alert of fund availability so the State can maximize its potential for obtaining federal grants.
- 3) Enable a closer working relationship with staffs of the Congressional Delegation to ensure that the Delegation is well informed about both the impact of proposed laws upon the Commonwealth and the Governor's position regarding such proposals.
- 4) Provide State agencies with up-to-date information on such items as status of legislation, important hearing dates, etc.
- 5) Ability to detect the feeling, or mood, in Washington, and to assess the support for issues important to Virginia, and to

communicate this back to the Governor and State agencies when necessary.

- 6) Ability to conduct in depth analyses of proposed legislation and rules for the benefit of the Governor and State agencies.
- 7) Ability to maintain personal contacts which are necessary for knowing what is going on, or to determine the best strategy Virginia should follow in influencing federal policy.
- 8) Opportunity to work with other states through their Washington offices and through the National Governor's Conference where it is beneficial to do so.
- 9) Assist State agencies in obtaining information from federal agencies.
- 10) Serve as a central contact for staffs of the Virginia Delegation which want information about the State, or directions as to State agency contacts, or who wish to refer a constituency case to an appropriate State agency.
- 11) Keep the Governor and State agencies informed about issues which need a State response.
- 12) Assure that someone is always on the scene so that the Virginia position will be heard at the right time and in the right places through personal contact.
- 13) Represent State agency officials at Washington meetings to save the Commonwealth the expense of having Richmond officials make the trip.

It is noteworthy that all of the above benefits are important to the Commonwealth. Virginia is fortunate in its close proximity to Washington, and State officials enjoy a quick two hour drive to the Nation's Capitol. However, in order for the most important of the above benefits to be realized, a permanent presence in Washington must be established. There is no way to thoroughly know the complexities of Washington without prolonged, on the scene, interaction with the personalities and forces that shape federal policy. This ability to know is the heart of the issue; it is the real benefit of a Washington office. If Virginia were to rely on repeated trips to Washington made by key State officials, the travel expenses required to derive the full benefits of a Washington office would perhaps be offset by establishing such an office.

Moreover, when considering the many trips and phone calls to Washington made each year by State officials representing various agencies, it might be concluded that Virginia is well represented. However, it must be remembered that these many contacts are often independent with little interagency coordination, and no one agency representing the interests of the Governor or the Commonwealth at large. Once a Washington office has been established and has gained credibility with State agencies, it can provide a focal point for the many separate communications between State agencies and Washington and can, in many cases, serve as a co-

ordinating point for much of this activity. The result could be an actual reduction of trips and phone calls to Washington made by State agencies.

This does not mean that a Washington office should stifle State agencies or interfere in their relations with the federal government. Nor does it mean that a State agency must cease working directly with its federal counterparts and instead use the Washington office as a "middle man". It is true, however, that a Governor may use the office to ensure conformity of agency positions with his own position, but this can only help to strengthen State government in the hands of its elected Chief Executive. In effect, the normal relationship between a Washington office and State agencies is that the Washington office serves as a valuable resource to the agencies on issues of vital concern.

At this point, it should be recalled that several State agencies surveyed regarding their attitudes about a Washington office felt that they are adequately served by their national associations (see page 13). However, several observations should be made regarding functionally oriented national associations. First, such organizations have been criticized for their inability to disseminate information to members in the most timely manner. These associations lack the mechanism, through their periodicals, for immediate dissemination of information, even though timing is often the key to success. Second, since national associations must represent all of their members, they cannot adequately represent the position of any one state. This gives their policy stances a general, weakened flavor where consensus cannot be reached upon the most crucial, specific issues. Third, functionally oriented associations represent merely the narrow interests of their membership rather than the general interest of a State at large. Accordingly, a functional area agency may, knowingly or unknowingly, work for policy positions through its national association even though the positions are contrary to the best interests of the State and to the overall position taken by the Governor himself. Finally, national associations must confine their State assistance to technical issues while a State's Washington office can provide its Governor and agencies with the political, as well as technical, ramifications of federal policy questions.

Few of the benefits listed above can be realized from option number 1 because most of the benefits presuppose a continued presence in Washington, and option number 1 relies upon the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs without a Washington office. It should be added, however, that the DIA State/Federal Relations program would be greatly strengthened by a Washington office. As noted previously, DIA's efforts are limited since it does not have the advantage of a permanent "eyes and ears" in Washington. In short, the DIA operation in Richmond is not a viable substitute for a Washington office and DIA alone cannot deliver the most important benefits of a permanent Washington office.

Options number 2, 3, and 4 differ merely in degree rather than in kind. Moreover, the degree to which most of the above benefits can be realized, as well as the number of activities pursued, will

depend upon the size of the office established. Option number 2 would require that the office greatly prioritize its work and perform selected functions only. Option number 3 would require the same except that more of the functions could be accomplished. Offices under both options number 2 and 3 would depend upon back up support by the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in order to provide full services. Option number 4 would have enough staff to accomplish most, if not all, of the listed benefits without the support of DIA.

### Local Governments

Thus far, little mention has been made about how a Washington office can benefit Virginia's local governments. As with other States, the office can offer a valuable service to localities by providing needed information and helping them through the Washington maze, especially when a locality applies for a federal grant. The need for such assistance is becoming more acute as localities rely more and more upon federal funding to provide basic local services.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing analysis, it is concluded that Virginia can derive substantial benefit from a Washington office. The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs cannot provide all the benefits of a Washington office, nor can a Washington office play the role of DIA. However, the presence of DIA precludes the need for a large Washington office (Option number 4). The DIA staff can provide support services for a small Washington office which will reduce costs since much of the overall effort can be carried on in Richmond. In effect, a close working relationship should exist between the Washington office and DIA.

A Washington office would add to Virginia's present efforts, most, if not all, of the benefits noted on pages 15 and 16. It would provide a continuing presence in Washington and serve as the Governor's "eyes and ears" on the federal scene. Even though these benefits cannot be quantified with a dollar value, the Commonwealth should surely benefit from a trial period in Washington.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Commonwealth establish a State liaison office in Washington with two professional employees and one full time secretary (Option 3). The office should be lodged organizationally within the Office of the Governor, and its director should serve as special assistant to the Governor, reporting to the Governor on matters of state/federal relations and serving as the Governor's spokesman in Washington.

The director should be an individual who is thoroughly familiar with the operations of Virginia State Government, preferably having worked in State service. The position should be viewed as

one that requires a high degree of professionalism with a minimum of political attachment. His, or her, ability to gain a good reputation in the Washington establishment will be crucial to the office's success.

The approximate costs of the office will be \$100,000 per year for the first two years of operation (see Attachment A for an estimated budget). The office should be staffed by two professionals and should work closely with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, relying upon DIA in Richmond to provide back-up support.

In dividing activities between the Washington office and the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Washington office should serve the following functions:

- 1) Establish an ongoing working relationship with Virginia's Congressional Delegation and its staff.
- 2) Serve as the Governor's spokesman and representative on state/federal matters.
- 3) Serve as Virginia's "eyes and ears" in Washington, alerting the Governor and State agencies to such things as developments impacting Virginia, important hearing dates, individuals to contact in the federal executive branch, sources of information, and strategies for influencing federal policy.
- 4) Work closely with other States through their Washington offices and with national associations, such as the National Governor's Conference.
- 5) Keep track of sources of federal funding and alert State agencies to early opportunities for federal grants.
- 6) Serve as a central contact for staffs of the Virginia Delegation which want information about the State, or directions as to State agency contacts, or which wish to refer a particular constituency case to an appropriate State agency.
- 7) Attend meetings of importance to the Commonwealth and report their details to appropriate State agencies.

The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in Richmond should support the Washington office in the following ways:

- 1) Continuation of federal legislative monitoring and the bi-monthly legislative status report to State agencies.
- 2) Continuation of the **Federal Register** abstract report to State agencies.
- 3) Monitoring federal appropriations.
- 4) Provide the Washington office with needed information about the Commonwealth.

- 5) Write issue analyses for the Washington office when the office needs assistance.
- 6) Disseminate information to local governments on the availability of federal funds.
- 7) Work with State agencies in developing coordinated responses to federal policy issues.
- 8) Serve as functional specialists for major federal policy areas, such as education, human affairs, and transportation, and conduct in depth analyses by functional areas.
- 9) Work with State agencies to establish federal legislative priorities.

The above functions presuppose a joint effort between the Washington office and DIA. The DIA staff will rely upon the Washington office for needed information in monitoring the development of federal policy and in reporting to State agencies. The Washington office will provide DIA with insights and information which are not otherwise available. Moreover, the Washington office will help DIA set priorities for emphasis in its state/federal relations program.

DIA will provide the Washington office with staff support on any functions for which the Washington office needs support, especially those which are best performed in Richmond. It will provide the office with information and perform "leg work" at home. Moreover, it will serve as the primary resource for tracking and monitoring federal policy development and analyzing policy issues, thus freeing the Washington office staff for broad policy concerns.

The presence of a Washington office should not be a threat to existing relationships between State agencies and the federal agencies they work with. It should instead serve as a valuable resource to State agencies. State agencies should not be required to use the Washington office as a "middleman" unless they need special assistance from that office.

However, the Washington office should serve to strengthen the role of the Governor as policy maker for State agencies. First, the office should keep the Governor apprised of all significant federal policy developments that impact the Commonwealth. This will help to ensure a well informed State position on important issues. Second, the director of the Washington office, as special assistant to the Governor, will know the Governor's position and should have the authority to speak for the Governor on federal policy matters. Accordingly, the Washington office should serve as a coordinating mechanism for the various responses of State agencies by reviewing all State agency position statements before the statements are sent to their intended destinations, e.g., Virginia Delegation, Congressional Committees, etc.

Local governments and Virginia's planning district commissions should also have access to the Washington office. However,



in order that demands on the office be kept to a manageable degree, localities and PDC's should be encouraged to contact DIA rather than going directly to the Washington office. This will enable DIA to respond to requests which can be answered from Richmond while referring the remaining requests to the Washington office. Consequently, the level of demands upon the office will be kept at a minimum.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**PROPOSED BUDGET**

**PERSONAL SERVICES \***

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Salaries           |          |
| Director           | \$35,000 |
| Staff Professional | 25,600   |
| Secretary          | 11,472   |

**CONTRACTUAL SERVICES**

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Reproduction | 1,000 |
| Postage      | 1,170 |
| Telephone    | 2,500 |
| Travel       | 3,684 |
| Petty Cash   | 1,500 |

**SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS**

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Office Supplies | 1,312 |
|-----------------|-------|

**EQUIPMENT**

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Office Furniture | 3,424 |
| Office Machines  | 925   |
| Subscriptions    | 500   |
| Rental           | 1,500 |

**CURRENT CHARGES AND OBLIGATIONS**

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| Rent | 4,005 |
|------|-------|

**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Federal Old Age Insurance | 2,604 |
| VRSRS                     | 2,340 |
| Group Insurance           | 208   |
| Medical/Hospital          | 875   |

|              |                    |                            |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>FIRST YEAR</b>  | <b>\$99,619</b>            |
|              | <b>SECOND YEAR</b> | <b>\$101,000</b>           |
|              |                    | (Inflation less equipment) |

\*Salaries were established in accordance with prevailing rates for employees of state offices in Washington.

