

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

EMMETT W. HANGER, JR.
24TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ALL OF AUGUSTA, GREENE, AND HIGHLAND
COUNTIES; ALL OF THE CITIES OF LEXINGTON,
STAUNTON, AND WAYNESBORO; AND PART OF
ALBEMARLE, ROCKBRIDGE, AND ROCKINGHAM COUNTIES
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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL
SERVICES, CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
FINANCE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
RULES

January 5, 2009

The Honorable Tim Kaine
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Charles Colgan
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Lacy Putney,
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

c/o Division of Legislative Automated Systems (DLAS)
910 Capitol Square
General Assembly Building, Suite 660
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Attention: Legislative Documents and Reports Processing

Re: 2008 Accomplishment of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission

Dear Governor Kaine:

As Chairman of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission, I am pleased to present this report to you on the accomplishments during 2008. I remain deeply appreciative of the continued membership and the work efforts expended by members of the House of Delegates and my fellow co-workers in the Senate.

Please do not hesitate to call upon me if I may be of further assistance.

With kindest personal regards and all best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,


Emmett Hanger
Chairman

As defined in Section 61.1-659.27 of the Code of Virginia, the Commission's purpose and mission is to provide guidance for the stewardship and enhancement of the water quality and natural resources of the Rappahannock River Basin. The Commission is a forum in which the state, and fourteen local governments to include The City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Culpeper, Spotsylvania, King George, Orange, Richmond, Essex, Westmoreland, Fauquier, Caroline, Rappahannock, Stafford, Lancaster, and Madison and citizens of the Commonwealth work to affect the Basin's water quality, quantity and other natural resources. We continue to promote communication, coordination and education, and by seeking appropriate solutions to identified problems, the Commission promotes activities by local, state and federal governments and individuals that foster voluntary resource stewardship for the environmental and economic health of the Basin.

Since our last report, we have continued to carry out our designated work program with significant success. In 2008, we conducted four meetings in March, June, September and December in the King George Courthouse, town of Tappahannock, town of Orange and the city Richmond (in the Capitol building) respectively. Meeting materials are available on the Commission's website: www.RappRiverBasin.org

Dr. William Cox of Virginia Tech, who had previously worked with the RRBC and its Water Allocation Group, prepared a detailed summary of the laws, regulations and agreements that govern water quality in Virginia in 2005. This past year RRBC staff completed its third update to Dr. Cox's summary. This summary is posted on the Commission's website and is used by water resource professional across the Commonwealth.

The Rappahannock River Basin Nonpoint Source Workgroup: There have been five meetings of the Nonpoint Source Workgroup. Serving as the Commission's technical advisory group their charge is to advise us on how the tributary strategy can be implemented in a reasonable way with a high degree of success. There were also multiple meetings of several subcommittees of the work group on specific non-point source pollution concerns.

The Work Group was asked this year to begin working on some of the recommendations of the 2007 Rappahannock River Summit. The primary effort has been to begin to develop recommendations for facilitating market-based solutions to our non-point source pollution problems. It was pointed out at the 2007 summit that it is highly unlikely that there will ever be sufficient public-sector resources to clean up the Rappahannock River (and the Chesapeake Bay) to desired levels and therefore we must investigate ways to encourage and facilitate private-sector investment.

To that end the work group began by developing an understanding of Ecosystem Services, a project being lead by the Virginia Division of Forestry. An interim report was given to the Commission at the December 2008 meeting. The conclusion of that report was that VDOF should continue to develop its program which will aid landowners in efforts to maximize income from conservation practices that will result in improved water quality. As this effort succeeds the result will be improvements to water quality based largely on private sector investments.

Ecosystem Services focuses on farm and forest land. The work group will focus attention in 2009 on the built environment. Urban and suburban runoff is a major contributor to nutrient pollution in the basin and little is being done to invest in improvements in these areas of the basin. The work group hopes to develop recommendations in 2009 that will aid in facilitating market-based solutions in this area.

The Commission staff continues to maintain information on the website. In addition to a listing of members and events it contains information on Commission meetings and the continuing efforts of the Non-point Source Group.