

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP REPORT

December 2021

Wastewater Infrastructure Working Group

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 3

PROBLEM STATEMENT 4

JOINT LETTER OF AGREEMENT..... 8

INITIAL WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WORK GROUP..... 9

SB 1396..... 11

COMMONWEALTH WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY 12

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY WORKING GROUP..... 12

WASTEWATER NEEDS ASSESSMENT 20

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE..... 21

INDEMNIFICATION FUND..... 21

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER..... 22

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DATA ON SEPTIC FAILURES AND RELATED ISSUES23

 1. Elicitation of information from environmental health specialists 25

 2. Statistical analysis of repair permits 25

DEQ SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA PILOT PROGRAM..... 28

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WORK GROUP 29

 1. Research Data Needs to Fully Assess Wastewater Infrastructure Problems 29

 2. Prevent the Human Health, Water Quality, and Economic Impacts through Public Education and Proper Maintenance 32

 3. Eliminate Barriers to Fully Utilize Existing Resources and Increase Funding 37

 4. Consideration of stakeholder responses during the 2021 regional roundtable session. ... 41

APPENDICES 42

 A. Joint Letter of Agreement..... 43

 B. Funding Sources..... 47

 C. SB 1396..... 49

 D. Working Group Members..... 56

 E. Working Group Guidelines 58

 F. Working Group 2021 Work Plan 64

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July of 2019, the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, signed a joint letter of agreement (Appendix A) establishing an interagency Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group to assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and to develop policy recommendations. The Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group explored the prevalence of failing septic systems, particularly in Tidewater and Southwest Virginia, learned of a pilot program to assess and resolve problems with small municipal sewer systems, and discussed existing barriers to adequate waste treatment. The Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group recommended establishing a policy that prioritizes the Commonwealth's commitment to providing all Virginians access to affordable waste treatment that supports their health, local economies, and clean water. To position the Commonwealth to seek and prioritize limited funding, the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group identified research and data needs to more comprehensively and effectively assess wastewater infrastructure problems. Several recommendations from the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group centered on educating students and the public about wastewater treatment and to prevent infrastructure failures through adequate oversight and proper maintenance. Finally, the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group identified opportunities to maximize use of existing funding sources for wastewater treatment and recommended increased funding.

In 2021, the General Assembly approved Chapter 382 of the Acts of Assembly (SB1396) which codified certain recommendations from the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group. SB 1396 amended the Code of Virginia (the Code) to strengthen the Commonwealth's wastewater infrastructure by adding § 62.1-223.1 to the Code establishing a policy for the Commonwealth to

prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that is protective of public health and the environment, and supports local economic growth and stability. The legislation accomplishes the policy through education, collaboration of government entities, coordination and innovative use of available wastewater infrastructure funding, the consideration of climate change impacts in wastewater regulations, and with a preference for community-based solutions. SB 1396 also added § 62.1-223.2 to the Code to codify the Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (the Working Group) to consist of appropriate government entities and stakeholders to support and advise the Administration and General Assembly regarding the Commonwealth's wastewater policy. The legislation also added § 62.1-223.3 to the Code to direct the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to estimate the amount of wastewater infrastructure funding necessary to implement the Commonwealth's wastewater policy every four years. The legislation amended § 32.1-164 of the Code to authorize VDH to include considerations for the impacts of climate change in the regulations for design and permitting of onsite sewage systems. Lastly, the legislation amended §32.1-164.1.01 of the Code to authorize VDH to use the funds collected and deposited into the Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund for loans and grants to assist qualifying homeowners with repairing or improving onsite sewage systems.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

While the majority of Virginia residents have access to adequate wastewater treatment, even in 2021 a number of individuals and communities throughout the Commonwealth continue to lack access to affordable wastewater solutions that are protective of their health and the environment, some even live without access to any indoor plumbing. A recent effort, described in this report, by the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute for

Marine Science (CCRM), College of William and Mary and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) identified no less than 75 communities without adequate wastewater infrastructure, and 17 “shovel ready” solutions requiring an estimated \$49.5 million in funding. Inadequate and failing wastewater treatment, whether onsite sewage (septic) or sewerage systems, threatens human health, water quality, and economic development in the Commonwealth.

Despite significant efforts by multiple state agencies, local government organizations, the federal government and nongovernmental organizations, the existence of pockets of failing wastewater infrastructure remains a statewide issue of grave concern. The goal of the Working Group is to better understand the scope and extent of the problem, to provide specific and actionable recommendations for improving coordination and alignment of programs, and to identify means to target limited state and federal resources to deliver the greatest results for individuals and communities in need.

In a Revis and Gregory article entitled “Onsite Sewage Systems and Environmental Justice in Virginia,”¹ VDH identified the problem of “wastewater islands.” These are “areas in Virginia where a higher than average number of individuals within communities do not have access to affordable onsite waste solutions protective of health and the environment and/or where a concentration of failing wastewater systems exist.” Wastewater islands can be found in rural areas with poor soils that do not support adequate septic systems, and small lots in urban and suburban communities without adequate capacity to properly maintain small sewer systems. Communities with inadequate wastewater treatment are also limited in opportunities for economic growth and stability.

¹ Danna L. Revis and James L. Gregory, Onsite Sewage Systems and Environmental Justice in Virginia. Virginia Department of Health. 2015.

Proper ongoing operation and maintenance of existing wastewater infrastructure is equally vital to the protection of public health and the environment and economic growth. For instance, communities served by small sewer systems must take steps, such as eliminating stormwater overflows, to ensure their systems can properly function. Further, for the more than 1 million Virginia households served by septic systems, their systems will not last forever even if they are well maintained. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that after 15 to 40 years, septic systems can become clogged and fail, potentially discharging directly into the ground or nearby waterways. VDH estimates that over half of onsite septic systems are over 40 years old, permitted under less stringent requirements, meaning thousands of Virginians need to be planning for their next wastewater solution today.

Sea level rise can exacerbate the problems already present in low-lying areas and wastewater islands. Many of Virginia's coastal communities have a moderate to high level of risk for sea level rise with a large number of those communities largely reliant on onsite septic systems. Recurrent flooding due to sea level rise can cause septic system failure by exposing systems in low-lying areas to surface water flooding or inundation from rising groundwater levels, both of which can impede or completely stop wastewater treatment.

Failing wastewater systems can discharge excess nitrates into groundwater, or cause untreated wastewater to reach surface water. High levels of nitrates in groundwater pose a risk to human health, specifically for infants, who rely on groundwater as a source of drinking water. High nitrates in drinking water has been linked to infant methemoglobinemia, certain cancers, and thyroid disease. There are also a number of pathogens found in sewage which can cause illness.

When pollutants from improperly treated wastewater reach surface waters, algal blooms can form, which consume oxygen and create “dead zones” that block sunlight, hindering fish, shellfish, and underwater grasses and aquatic life. Given that the Chesapeake Bay provides economic and recreational benefits estimated at \$33 billion a year², keeping Virginia’s waters healthy is important to the state and local economies. Improper wastewater treatment can cause closures of recreational and shellfish harvesting waters, which can impact Virginia’s economy and recreational tourism. This water quality concern is not isolated to Virginia’s Chesapeake Bay watershed; the Clinch, Powell, and Holston River watersheds host the most biodiverse river systems in North America and form the backbone of an emerging economic resource – ecotourism – in economically distressed southwest Virginia.

Struggling rural and urban communities can lack access to funding and resources to provide for maintenance and upgrades to keep wastewater systems functioning properly. Failing systems can also carry criminal and civil penalties for failure to comply with wastewater regulations, which may cause many homeowners and even localities to avoid coming forward to seek funding assistance. Their struggles are often made worse by the shame of having to discuss sanitation issues in their homes and the fear of eviction if onsite septic failures are reported by a tenant.

In addition to impacting low income communities, the issue also disproportionately affects Black or African-American occupied housing units, making this a significant environmental justice concern. A 2004 report by the Rural Community Assistance Project³ found that Black or African American households accounted for 40% of all households in the

² EPA Needs to Better Report Chesapeake Bay Challenges: A Summary Report, Evaluation Report (US EPA, Office of the Inspector General, July 14, 2008).

³ Still Living Without the Basics in the 21st Century: Analyzing the Availability of Water and Sanitation Services in the United States, Rural Community Assistance Project. 2004.

Commonwealth that lacked indoor plumbing; however, Black or African Americans make up only 20% of Virginia's total population.

JOINT LETTER OF AGREEMENT

During development of the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), VDH, DEQ, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA), called for establishing a Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group to urgently and intentionally elevate the funding needs necessary to address the Commonwealth's failing wastewater infrastructure. These agencies sought to coordinate and enhance their ongoing efforts to address these concerns both within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and statewide.

In July of 2019, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, signed a joint letter of agreement (Appendix A) to establish the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group, which consisted of representatives from DEQ, VDH, DHCD, VRA, and the Office of Natural and Historic Resources. The administration and agencies were advised by marine scientists from CCRM and legal scholars with the Virginia Coastal Policy Center (VCPC) at William & Mary Law School. The purpose of the letter was to outline the scope, goals, and focus of the Work Group. These goals included: identify issues of greatest concern; develop recommendations for the most feasible, equitable, and appropriate approach to identify wastewater infrastructure needs; prioritize solutions within areas of greatest concern; direct joint efforts and coordinate agencies' funding and loan opportunities; and proactively engage communities identified with the greatest needs.

INITIAL WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WORK GROUP

The initial Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group held seven meetings between October 2019 and May 2020. Members of the Work Group include: Ann Jennings, Deputy Secretary for Natural and Historic Resources (now Secretary for Natural and Historic Resources); Ann Phillips, Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection; Dr. Parham Jaber, Chief Deputy Commissioner, Public Health and Preparedness, VDH; Julie Henderson, Director, Office of Environmental Health Services (OEHS), VDH; Lance Gregory, Director, Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services, VDH; Sonal Iyer, Director, Division of Data Management and Process Improvement, VDH; Karri Atwood, Legislative Affairs, Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services, VDH ; Allen Knapp, Director, OEHS, VDH (retired); Dr. Carl Hershner, Director, CCRM (retired); Dr. Kirk Havens, Director, CCRM; Dr. Molly Mitchell, Marine Scientist, CCRM; Robert Isdell, Postdoctoral Research Associate, CCRM; Christine Tomblason, Marine Scientist, CCRM; Erik Johnston, Director, DHCD; Jay Grant, Deputy Director of Community Development, DHCD; Matt Weaver, Policy and Legislative Director, DHCD; Valerie Thomson, Director of Administration, DEQ; Karen Doran, Director, Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program, DEQ; Stephanie Hamlett, Executive Director, VRA; and Shawn Crumlish, Director of Financial Services, VRA. The Work Group was advised by Elizabeth Andrews, Director, and Angela King, Assistant Director, with VCPC at William & Mary Law School.

The initial work group determined a critical first step was to document the extent of inadequate wastewater treatment across the Commonwealth. Members discussed what, if any, documentation is gathered by state agencies and found their own sources to be limited and often outdated.

The initial work group identified and subsequently reached out to federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations for any available data on mapping or documenting wastewater infrastructure needs. Subsequent research led the initial work group to determine that the Commonwealth should invest in mapping and survey efforts to more comprehensively understand the scope and extent of the problem and funding need.

To that end, as detailed in the next section, the group worked with CCRM researchers on their efforts to develop a science-based approach to mapping “hot spots” of failing septic systems and septic systems threatened by rising sea levels in the coastal plain.⁴ Discussions also focused on the existing VDH Environmental Health Database (EHD) which tracks permitted onsite septic systems but does not, at this time, offer a full picture of all existing systems. Information regarding sewer infrastructure needs is largely driven by the Water Quality Improvement Fund survey of large municipal nutrient reduction project needs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and by localities that self-select to pursue DEQ or DHCD funding.

With input from the initial work group, VDH and CCRM launched a collaborative effort to map communities with straight pipes, failing septic systems, aging systems and “shovel ready” project needs. Working with a CCRM-developed on-line mapping tool, during mid- to late April 2020, local Health Districts documented these wastewater problems based upon their hands-on knowledge of the communities in their local service areas.

The initial work group also explored DEQ’s Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program (CWFAP) southwest Virginia pilot program, detailed in this report, which is using financial incentives to fund critical wastewater projects: sewer system evaluation surveys, inflow

⁴ The project was funded in part by a grant from EPA’s Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program via VDH’s Onsite Sewage System Tracking program.

and infiltration (I/I) studies, collection system repair projects to reduce I/I and/or sanitary sewer overflows (SSO), and projects that eliminate straight pipe, gray water, and partially treated wastewater discharges to surface waters in the region.

The initial work group's deliberations benefitted from previous investigations by VCPC at William & Mary Law School. VCPC provided a broad understanding of the problem and potential solutions through their study entitled "Onsite Sewage Systems: Background, Framework, and Solutions."⁵

Between meetings of the initial work group, each participating agency provided any available information on the general scope of wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth, outstanding data needs, and funding sources. The initial work group also prepared a summary of existing federal, state and private funding sources (Appendix B).

SB 1396

In 2021, the General Assembly approved SB1396 which codified certain recommendations from the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group. The legislation incorporated several recommendations from the initial work group. The legislation had five major components: i) a Commonwealth policy for wastewater infrastructure; ii) the codification of the Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (the Working Group); iii) to have DEQ in partnership with VDH to assess wastewater infrastructure funding needs in the Commonwealth every four years; iv) to authorize VDH to include considerations for the impacts of climate change in the Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations; and v) to authorize VDH to use the

⁵ Jamie Huffman, Sarah Simonetti, and R. Scott Herbert. 2018. Onsite Sewage Systems: Background, Framework, and Solutions. Virginia Coastal Policy Center, College of William & Mary Law School.

Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund for loans and grants to assist homeowners with repairs of onsite sewage systems.

COMMONWEALTH WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY

SB 1396 amended the Code of Virginia (the Code) to strengthen the Commonwealth's wastewater infrastructure by adding § 62.1-223.1 to the Code establishing a policy for the Commonwealth to prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that is protective of public health and the environment, and supports local economic growth and stability. The Commonwealth policy endorses public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment. The policy also endorses consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines among government entities, along with prioritized, focused, and innovative use of state and federal funding. This legislation also establishes a preference for community-based and regional projects as opposed to individual site-by-site solutions, and integration of solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems. Lastly, the Commonwealth policy endorses incorporation of the effects of climate change into wastewater treatment and regulatory and funding programs.

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY WORKING GROUP

SB 1396 also added § 62.1-223.2 to the Code to codify the Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (the Working Group) as an advisory board in the executive branch. The purpose of the Working Group is to continually assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations. The Working Group has four ex officio members; the Director of DEQ, the State Health Commissioner, the Director of DHCD, and the Executive Director of VRA, or their designees. In addition, the Working Group is to invite participation by the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), the Virginia Association of

Planning District Commissions (VAPDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (VOWRA), the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA), the Virginia Rural Water Association (VRWA), and the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP).

Section 62.1-223.2 of the Code establishes the following powers and duties for the Working Group:

1. Assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations.
2. Promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment.
3. Encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines.
4. Endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems.
5. Support prioritized, focused, and innovative use of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to § 62.1-223.3.
6. Prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that protects public health and the environment and supports local economic growth and stability.
7. Support incorporation of the effects of climate change into wastewater treatment regulatory and funding programs.

The Working Group is also required to submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the activity of the Working Group. The provisions of § 62.1-223.2 of the Code which establishes the Working Group will expire in July 1, 2030.

The Working Group held its first meeting on July 12, 2021. The members of the Working Group are David Paylor, Director of DEQ, Dr. M. Norman Oliver, State Health Commissioner, Stephanie Hamlett, Executive Director of VRA, and Jay Grant, Director of Outreach, Planning and Compliance at DHCD. At the first meeting the Working Group heard remarks from Ann Jennings, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources and Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi, patron of SB 1396. The Working Group selected Director Paylor as Chair, established guidelines for the Working Group, reviewed the list of stakeholders to be represented at Working Group meeting, and approved a 2021 work plan for the group. The full summary of the meeting can be found at www.townhall.virginia.gov.⁶ The Working Group held its second meeting on November 18, 2021, and the final meeting of the year on December 17, 2021. The full summaries of those meetings can be found at www.townhall.virginia.gov as well.⁷

As part of the 2021 work plan, the Working Group held three regional roundtable meetings in September to hear feedback from stakeholders on four specific questions. A summary of stakeholder responses is provided below.

1. How to promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment?

Interaction with the public.

- Most local health department interactions with the public are person to person, which provides a good opportunity to educate homeowners.

⁶ https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/GetFile.cfm?File=meeting\58\32627\Minutes_VDH_32627_v1.pdf

⁷ The November 18, 2021 summary is available at <https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/Viewmeeting.cfm?meetingid=33360>, and the December 17, 2021 summary is available at <https://www.townhall.virginia.gov/L/Viewmeeting.cfm?meetingid=34465>.

- Septic Smart week includes the potential for community wide materials, news releases, and other outreach opportunities at a statewide level (e.g. Governor's proclamation).
- Sewage haulers do a good job of educating homeowners.
- Encourage coordinated effort to educate owners when a home with an onsite system is purchased.
- Find ways to do outreach through churches and existing community groups that are already trusted sources.
- Reach people under the poverty line who see septic as a higher level problem; with support from planning district commissions, DEQ, or community groups.
- Incorporate public education about septic health into existing clean water outreach and education.
- Do local water quality fairs or similar events.

Incorporation into K-12 education.

- Incorporate wastewater treatment into programs for K-12 education and Envirothon events.

New requirements.

- Establish a statewide pump out requirement; VDH is in a better position to educate the public through pump out programs; need to tie them more into the public health benefits.
- Mirror SERCAP's grant program requirements for homeowners to attend an informational program on basic septic tank information.
- Septic system inspection should be required as part of a home purchase.

Marketing effort.

- Local health departments need more handouts for education.

- Develop marketing plan with emphasis on a core message that all partners across state, local and nonprofit agencies utilize.
- Provide regular media releases to a group newsletter over time at a regular interval.
- Put educational flyers with water bills.
- Biggest hurdle is gaining acceptance by local governments and political boards that onsite sewage can be a permanent solution.
- Promote economic stability and new job creation of wastewater infrastructure projects to local governments. Example, Clinch River State Park can be an economic draw; important to address straight pipes and failing systems to maintain good water quality.

Technical assistance.

- Offer assistance to people to help with making applications for funds.
- 2. How to encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines?**

Wastewater Infrastructure Working Group Meetings.

- Having grants on the agenda for every meeting of the Working Group.
- Continue to do the work to get partners to participate with the Working Group.
- Bring accountability to participants in Working Group meetings. Possibly establish some committees (not too many) to help bring more accountability.
- Coordination, collaboration and continued communication with stakeholders on the work of the Working Group is key.
- Local watershed groups can be an excellent source of grant information.

Grant processes.

- Mirror DHCD's housing rehabilitation interagency workgroup that is used to tailor grant products to the needs.
- Find ways to combine Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation funding, with other funds available at DEQ and VDH.
- Need a way to streamline the process for individual homeowners that are not part of a community based project.
- Appropriate planning before implementation. Cannot have a drawn out planning process.
- Develop a streamlined grant application for single family households.
- Develop one grant application template for all funding sources for subsets of wastewater needs.

Build capacity.

- Look to help with capacity building through planning district commissions.
- Offer trainings on how to apply for grant funding for local stakeholders.
- Develop a pilot program to gather information on needs and troubleshoot issues.

Web portal dedicated to wastewater treatment.

- Build and maintain a web portal dedicated to wastewater treatment outreach and education with a table, flow chart or questionnaire to guide users to specifically available funding sources.

Regional workshops.

- Connect with USDA Rural Development's funding and financing regional workshops for system operators and owners.

3. How to endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems?

Identify communities for regional projects.

- Designating an area as a service district is helpful from a planning and zoning perspective.
- Complete a wastewater infrastructure needs assessment.

Data improvement.

- Use existing data. Example Northern Neck Planning District Commission has a database of 400-500 people we've done a pump out for that could identify clusters of need.
- Advocate for VDH updating the database, and make the reporting of conventional system maintenance required. Service providers can populate the data.
- Collect and report to VDH evaluations of the status of an onsite system through existing pump out programs. Work with private sector to provide these evaluations.
- Improve data reporting to help identify pockets of needs.

Incentivize and promote community based projects.

- Increase funding when there is cooperation across jurisdictions.
- Score regional projects higher or provide a great amount of funding for regional based projects.
- Emphasize that underlying federal statutes state a preference for regional projects.
- Recommendation to establish by memorandum of understanding or similar mechanism for long-term oversight and maintenance of regional solutions through a local service authority.

- Conduct a long term cost comparison between individual systems versus community based systems.
- Address barriers to discharge systems when they are the best solution for a community.

Community involvement.

- Community involvement and the counties commitment to finding a solution was important to move the Catlett Calverton project in Fauquier County forward.
- Would be helpful to have local government entities willing to take ownership of smaller community based solutions, and charge owners a monthly fee. Many local entities do not want the liability.

4. How to support prioritized, focused and innovative uses of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to the wastewater infrastructure needs assessment required under § 62.1-223.3.

Prioritize low and moderate income households.

- Think it helps to have programs that prioritize low and moderate income households.

Application process.

- Would be helpful if the timing of those funding programs were aligned. DEQ solicits applications once a year for some programs, ongoing applications for others.
- Open submission would be preferable. Probably more true for competitive programs.
- Fully endorse the way DHCD does CDBG program. Forces people to plan out their project in advance.
- Use area median income to help align low and moderate income across programs.

- May be worth going back to look at language for the indemnification fund to use area median income rather than 200% of federal poverty guidelines; 80% of area median income is the gold standard for prioritizing low to moderate income households.

Pull support from existing examples and programs.

- Mirror program in Washington and Oregon. They have private and public funding for all types of home loans and homeowners. They blend the money from the different programs to meet the need.⁸
- Get support from VDH Population Health to assist with these types of Community Health Assessments.

Funding mechanisms.

- Provide planning grants to support local government-driven wastewater needs assessments.
- Allow for skilled labor contributions on projects to be counted towards the match contribution. The DHCD water program supports this approach, called the self-help program.

Co-benefits for grant programs.

- Develop a program where people can gain work skills, obtain licensure working under a licensed professional.

WASTEWATER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SB 1396 created § 62.1-223.3 of the Code to require DEQ, in partnership with VDH, DHCD, VRA, and other stakeholders to determine every four years an estimate of the amount of wastewater infrastructure funding that is necessary to implement the Commonwealth's

⁸ <https://www.craft3.org/Borrow/clean-water-loans>

wastewater policy. The assessment must also determine needs that are not eligible to be covered by grant funding pursuant to the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Act. The first needs assessment must be provided by July 1, 2023, and every four years thereafter.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

SB 1396 also amended § 32.1-164 of the Code to authorize VDH to include considerations for the impacts of climate change in the regulations for design and permitting of onsite sewage systems. VDH has discussed the legislation with the Sewage Handling and Disposal Advisory Committee and developed a subgroup to work with VDH to develop an initial draft of considerations for inclusion in the Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations (12VAC5-610, the Regulations). VDH's goal is to provide proposed revisions to the Regulations, including considerations for inclusion of impacts of climate change, by December 2023.

INDEMNIFICATION FUND

Pursuant to § 32.1-164.1.01 of the Code of Virginia, \$10 of each onsite sewage system fee collected by VDH is deposited into the indemnification fund. Onsite sewage system owners may request up to \$30,000 from the fund to cover the cost of repairing a failed onsite sewage system when: 1) the original system fails within three years, 2) the owner files a request for reimbursement within one year of the failure, and 3) specific actions of VDH were negligent and those actions caused the failure. Historically, VDH received dozens of indemnification fund requests per year. Following implementation of a statewide quality assurance program, the number of requests dropped significantly. Also, more and more onsite sewage system evaluations and designs were being conducted by private sector providers. In 2018, VDH began a five year process to transition all onsite sewage system evaluations and designs to the private

sector, and VDH expects that very few indemnification fund applications will be received after a full transition of evaluation and design services.

With the change in direct services and anticipated reduction in applications, the SB 1396 amended §32.1-164.1:01 of the Code to allow VDH to use the funding to provide grants and loans to property owners with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines to repair failing onsite sewage systems or install onsite sewage systems on properties that lack adequate sewage disposal. These funds, if used to provide zero interest loans, will assist a small number of eligible owners with repairs. It would also allow VDH to encourage owners to operate and maintain their systems in compliance with applicable law without resorting to enforcement measures.

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER

As part of SB 1396 funding was provided to VDH for the Wastewater Infrastructure Manager at VDH. This position is responsible for: i) developing and implementing the grant and loan program from the Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund; ii) overseeing a comprehensive assessment of onsite sewage system needs throughout the Commonwealth; iii) serving as an ongoing liaison to the Work Group and its local, federal and private partners to coordinate, align, and capitalize on available funding opportunities for septic system repairs and improvements throughout the Commonwealth; and iv) coordinate with local health departments, state and local agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure that grant and loan funds are focused on those areas identified as having high levels of health disparities and environmental impacts resulting from failing septic systems.

ANALYSIS OF EXISTING DATA ON SEPTIC FAILURES AND RELATED ISSUES

The CCRM at VIMS and the Division of Data Management at VDH collaborated on an analysis of septic data to better inform the Working Group. The purpose of the analysis was to attempt to identify areas with high rates of septic failures, areas of emerging concern due to sea level rise, and other potential considerations (such as ecological or socioeconomic impacts).

There is no existing data concerning the location of failed or failing septic systems beyond those systems where VDH has received a complaint or an application to repair a failing system. VDH septic repair permit data set is a reasonable proxy; however, that data set was created for regulatory purposes and conclusions drawn from it require some critical caveats:

- The data does not necessarily represent the total number of septic failures because there may be currently unidentified issues. This means that repair permits could underestimate the total problem. This also could lead to geographic discrepancies in spatial patterns of failures if socio-economic factors affect the likelihood that a septic issue is identified and repaired.
- The data does not necessarily represent the total number of septic failures because it does not record the degree of severity of the problem resulting in the repair. This could mean that the repair permits are equally counting minor issues and severe drain field failures; which means the data could overestimate the total problem. This leads to an additional caveat, that the repair permits do not distinguish the reason for the repair. Areas with high numbers of septic failures could be due to all of the systems aging or could be due to rising groundwater tables.
- Repair permits are attached to street addresses. On large parcels, the actual drain field can be some distance from the street address. Therefore, potential explanatory variables (such

as the underlying soil conditions, groundwater levels, and proximity to waterways) cannot be extracted from other data sets and connected with repair permits with a high level of confidence. Broad generalizations can be made, but should be used cautiously.

- Dates on repair permits reflect a somewhat ambiguous time between when the issue occurred and when the issue was fixed. Temporal connections between septic issues and environmental impacts (such as adjacent water quality) cannot be made with a high level of confidence. Broad generalizations can be made, but should be used cautiously.
- The age of septic systems is known to be a factor in septic system failure. Construction permits for sites often occur prior to house or neighborhood construction and use tax parcel and lot numbers for permit location rather than addresses. Although this information can be used to locate the septic site, it must be done individually and a researcher cannot take advantage of the automated geocoding processes. Locating these sites individually is time-intensive; therefore, incorporating septic system age into an analysis would be very expensive.

The caveats listed above preclude the use of predictive modeling as the sole method for targeting areas where septic systems are most likely to fail now and under future sea level rise and increased rainfall intensity, duration, and frequency. Therefore, as an alternative, CCRM and VDH used a two-prong approach; 1) elicit information beyond that captured in the permit records from environmental health specialist working in local health departments, and 2) statistically analyze the geospatial distribution of permit repairs to find underlying patterns that could help inform decision-making.

1. Elicitation of information from environmental health specialists

Environmental Health Specialists (EHS) have unique knowledge about the localities where they work that is frequently not captured in existing databases. For example, these experts may know areas where few septic failures have occurred to date, but where all the systems in the area are rapidly approaching an age where failures become common. They may also be able to distinguish between areas where failures are due to high water tables and where the failures are due to the age of the system.

To capture this knowledge, CCRM has created an interactive map on ArcGIS Online. EHS can delineate polygons around areas with known issues and then identify the issues (including septic and drinking water issues), other characteristics of concern (socio-economic issues), and whether there is a shovel-ready project to address the issues. The output of the map is a geospatial dataset of areas with septic and/or drinking water issues known to EHS and may capture septic issues that are not currently obvious from the repair permit database. It can be used to target funding projects.

The Wastewater Interactive Viewer (WIV) has been launched and is can be continuously updated with additional data. CCRM and VDH staff have discussed options for working with additional stakeholders, such as local government officials, to assist in populating the WIV in the future.

2. Statistical analysis of repair permits

CCRM's approach to the statistical analysis uses the Emerging Hot Spot Analysis tool in ArcGIS. This tool looks at patterns across both spatial and temporal scales simultaneously. It can identify continuous hotspots (where there are constant, high numbers of repair permits) and

emerging hotspots (locations representing new, intensifying, or diminishing clusters of repair permits).

For this analysis, CCRM constrained the repair permit data to the years 2008-2018 to ensure consistency of data across localities and used a single temporal scale of one year. The analysis was done at two different spatial scales (1km and 3km) to examine the extent to which spatial scale impacts the results of the analysis. The analysis was performed on both the total number of repair permits within a cell and the number of repair permits standardized to the total number of houses. These two approaches answer slightly different questions. The first approach locates the areas with the most repair permits recorded and tends to identify areas with high density of housing. Targeting these areas for mitigation measures would reduce overall issues under current conditions. The second approach highlights areas where there are unusually high failures relative to the housing density. It helps identify where failures are likely due to aging infrastructure, high groundwater tables, or other factors.

The results of the analysis suggest three basic issues are occurring. First, there are several areas where hotspots of septic failure occur annually (continuous hot spots). These may be areas with high groundwater tables that have low suitability for septic systems. Second, there are also several areas that have been hot spots in some years, but not others (sporadic hot spots). This may be due to high annual water tables associated with heavy rain or sea level variability or periodic episodes of aging septic systems. These areas are good targets for monitoring, particularly in heavy precipitation years and under sea level rise. Last, there are emerging hot spots, areas that should be investigated to see if conditions have changed or if systems are beginning to reach the end of their lifespan. The information being gathered from the EHS may help explain these patterns.

Output for a selected analysis (1km, total number of repair permits) is included in CCRM's Final Report (found at https://www.vims.edu/ccrm/_non-public/wastewater/wastewater-infrastructure_final-report.pdf) as regional maps of repair permit hotspots. Ongoing work by CCRM includes assessing results of the hot spot analysis for their closeness to areas with water quality issues (bacterial counts) and their potential vulnerability to sea level rise impacts. Results of all the analyses will be put into a geospatial viewer:⁹ Virginia Wastewater Data Viewer (VADV)

The VADV is comprehensive and includes the current data from the WIV and will be update when future data is created. It requires login info, since there were concerns that not all of the data be made public. CCRM intends to incorporate the hot spot analysis and the sea level layers into a public map on AdaptVA for public dissemination.

This work by CCRM and VDH found that the single most important piece of data necessary to enhance our understanding of current conditions of septic systems and emerging threats to those systems is the geospatial location of each septic drain field, and the single most important model necessary to enhance our understanding of emerging threats to septic systems under sea level rise in the coastal plain is a robust groundwater model linked to sea level. The accuracy of spatial assessments of risk is dependent upon the accuracy of the underlying spatial data. Inaccurate geocoding of the address or assuming that the septic system lies at the same elevation as the structure it serves (minus ~3 feet for drain-field depth) will lead to underestimates of coastal septic systems vulnerable to sea level rise. Therein also lies the need for a robust groundwater model linked to sea level. As sea level rises, so too will the

⁹ Consideration should be given to combining mapping of wastewater hotspots with mapping of roadway and drinking water wells threatened by inundation.

groundwater. As groundwater is typically at or above sea level unless there is significant withdrawal, increases in groundwater table elevation as a result of sea level rise are likely to impact the efficiency of wastewater drain fields long before direct inundation.

DEQ SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA PILOT PROGRAM

DEQ's Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program (CWFAP) is offering loan forgiveness to localities in Southwest Virginia to address critical wastewater infrastructure challenges through a new pilot program. Localities within DEQ's Southwest Regional Office boundary are eligible to apply. These are the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe and the cities of Bristol, Galax and Norton.

This pilot program uses financial incentives, grants and loans, from the Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund to fund these types of critical projects: sewer system evaluation surveys, inflow and infiltration (I/I) studies, collection system repair projects to reduce I/I and/or sanitary sewer overflows (SSO), and projects that eliminate straight pipe, gray water, and partially treated wastewater discharges to surface waters in the region. In addition to improving and protecting water quality, the program will foster asset management and promote fiscal sustainability.

This pilot program is especially important to Southwest Virginia, in which many localities have difficulty funding certain types of projects that do not increase revenue streams. In addition to demographic challenges, the region is home to several ecologically important watersheds like the Clinch, Powell, and Holston River Watersheds. These river systems support the highest number of rare and imperiled fish and freshwater mussel species in North America, and provide a critical water supply for several communities in Southwest Virginia. Phase 1 of the pilot program was focused on reducing inflow and infiltration and eliminating sanitary sewer

overflows and began in the summer of 2020. Phase 2 of the pilot program seeks to eliminate direct discharges of sewage from straight pipes and failing septic systems. This phase is being planned for 2023. Depending on the success of the pilot program, DEQ hopes to extend this innovative funding initiative to other parts of the state, including Southside Virginia and the Eastern Shore.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE WORK GROUP

1. Research Data Needs to Fully Assess Wastewater Infrastructure Problems

The Working Group found the Commonwealth's and local governments' efforts to solve wastewater infrastructure problems are severely hampered by the lack of adequate and timely data on the extent of the need. This is true for household onsite septic systems, small community septic systems, and the wastewater utilities for less-populated local communities. Data gaps were identified by the workgroup as one of the greatest barriers to being able to fully quantify the extent of wastewater infrastructure needs throughout the Commonwealth. CCRM and VDH have pioneered several methods for documenting straight pipes, failed onsite systems, and aging systems as well as mapping "hot spots" for septic problems.

The Working Group recommends that investments in sufficient and ongoing documentation of wastewater infrastructure needs must be maintained and used to determine and prioritize scope of funding needs to address onsite system failures. Specifically, the Working Group recommends:

A. Providing continued and sufficient funding to support the ongoing CCRM and VDH collaboration to document onsite/community septic system "hot spots" in the coastal plain and to extend the analysis statewide. The "hot spots" analysis can be a crucial tool for assessing

potential target areas for funding, as well as informing public health policy analysis (e.g., community health assessments). However, the current model is a static snap-shot of 10 years of data and covers only a portion of the Commonwealth. Additional funding was provided during the 2021 General Assembly Session to expand the analysis statewide; however funding is necessary to provide for ongoing updates so that the tool can continue to serve as a guide for funding and health policy in the future.

B. Providing continued and sufficient funding to complete and periodically update the VDH/CCRM interactive mapping tool by collecting information provided by EHS about onsite and community system problem areas in their local health districts. Similar to the “hot spots” analysis, this tool provides crucial real world data from the EHS working within communities. This includes identification of potentially shovel ready projects in need of funding. Without sufficient funding, the tool would be a single snap-shot that may only provide near-term benefits.

C. Sufficiently fund and continue the VDH ongoing effort to create and maintain a complete inventory of all onsite systems in the VDH EHD and in non-EHD data systems, collect data on septic systems currently not included in EHD, develop data import capabilities in EHD to complete the inventory, and provide a public facing interface for onsite sewage system data. The EHD houses data on regulated activities including new construction, repair permits, and operation and maintenance of onsite systems. The Working Group recommends creating a public portal for viewing the onsite system data housed in EHD to assist funding agencies in prioritizing and effectively directing limited resources.

Additionally, hundreds of thousands of onsite sewage systems were installed before VDH began tracking permitted systems in the EHD database in 2003. These records are housed in hard copy files at local health districts throughout the Commonwealth, and would require a

substantial resource investment to manually enter into the EHD database. However, with the advent of GIS systems for locality parcel data, and other electronic property data records, it may be possible to streamline the effort to create a complete inventory of properties served by onsite sewage systems. Combining these efforts with developing import capabilities in EHD will improve the quality of onsite septic system data displayed in the public portal.

VDH has initiated a pilot effort to inventory septic systems not currently captured as regulated activities within the EHD database. VDH worked with DEQ and local government officials in the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Eastern Shore regions of Virginia to discuss a possible transition of local Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Pump Out programs from locality-based oversight to VDH (report on the proposed pilot program can be found at <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2021/RD342/PDF>). The first steps in this transition will be the development of a complete inventory of onsite systems in the region and preparing to import systems into the EHD.

The Working Group discussed multiple barriers slowing identification of failing onsite waste treatment including the reluctance of homeowners and, particularly, renters from notifying VDH of repair needs. *The VCPC at the William & Mary Law School reviewed Virginia's residential landlord/tenant laws and suggest legislative amendments to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to provide confidentiality protection to renters filing waste treatment-related complaints against their landlords. The Workgroup agrees with VCPC's assessment and recommendations.*

The lack of a comprehensive, accurate, and timely picture of problems at existing wastewater treatment facilities was also identified as a significant issue of concern by the Working Group. Without a clearer picture of those problems, state and federal agencies are

hampered in their efforts to prioritize and direct limited resources. Generally, our understanding of wastewater treatment funding needs is driven by those localities that self-select to request assistance from DEQ, VRA, DHCD, and other state agencies as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. The Working Group discussed the value of documenting the backlog of wastewater infrastructure needs, particularly to prepare Virginia to take fuller advantage of federal funding opportunities. The goal of any effort should be for agencies to partner with localities to demonstrate the need and request the federal government to increase the key funding programs at VDH, DHCD, and DEQ. This goal is accomplished in part by completion of the wastewater infrastructure needs assessment required every four years pursuant to § 62.1-223.3 of the Code.

In addition to documenting the backlog of existing wastewater funding needs, the Working Group recommends consideration of proactive, regional planning to document longer-term wastewater treatment needs and long-term management, particularly for communities not served by municipal wastewater treatment facilities. Similar long-term planning for public drinking water needs is already conducted. Long-term planning for wastewater would guide the Working Group and future administrations in policy and budget recommendations. Wastewater planning should be overseen by the Working Group in partnership with local governments and local planning district/regional commissions.

2. Prevent the Human Health, Water Quality, and Economic Impacts through Public Education and Proper Maintenance

Properly constructed septic systems cannot continue to fully function forever and will have a useful life of 15 to 40 years. The useful life of a septic system is diminished by a lack of maintenance and exposure to flooding from surface and ground waters. Too often, households

on septic are not fully aware of their waste treatment and, unlike a home on sewer, do not receive a monthly or bimonthly “reminder” in the form of a utility bill. Working Group members noted that the operation and maintenance of septic systems can be “free” until the system fails. The Work Group found that public education, statewide maintenance requirements, and enhanced oversight of septic systems is warranted to prevent further erosion of human health, water quality and local economies from failed wastewater treatment.

Virginia’s curricula for public K-12 schools do not currently include education about wastewater treatment. Working Group members noted that the proper collection and treatment of human waste involves chemistry, biology, soil science, engineering, math, environmental science and physics. Increasing students’ and parents’ awareness and appreciation of the importance of wastewater treatment through public education would help to increase both public support for needed investments in wastewater treatment and understanding that adequate treatment is not always available to all Virginians.

- A. *The Working Group recommends incorporating an understanding of wastewater treatment in appropriate public K-12 curricula, such as STEM modules, math, science or environmental science courses.*
- B. For the general public, consistent messaging is necessary to rebrand wastewater treatment as critical to economic development, water quality, and public health. *The Working Group recommends working with its partner state agencies, local governments, and stakeholders to rebrand community and onsite wastewater treatment as critical infrastructure on par with drinking water, roads, and bridges and to use innovative online educational platforms to engage the public.*

Proper and consistent maintenance of onsite systems can extend the life of a system and reduce homeowner costs associated with repair or replacement. Pump-out requirements exist in Tidewater Virginia pursuant to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (Act).¹⁰ The Act requires homeowners and businesses to pump out their systems once every 5 years and provides for alternative approaches including documentation that a system has been inspected, is functioning properly, and does not require maintenance. Some localities outside of Tidewater also require septic maintenance by local ordinance. *The Working Group recommends consideration of extending a requirement to either report maintenance of conventional onsite systems statewide or to specifically require periodic system pump outs. Evaluating a statewide septic maintenance requirement should be done with affected stakeholders and local governments.*

In part to enhance oversight of onsite system maintenance within Tidewater Virginia, VDH worked with DEQ and local government officials in the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, and Eastern Shore regions to assess the transition of local Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act pump out programs from locality-based oversight to VDH oversight. In 2019, the General Assembly approved HB 2322, which required VDH to develop a plan for transitioning oversight. An interim report was provided to the 2020 General Assembly¹¹, with the final report provided in August, 2021. The plan outlined in the report will required additional statutory authority and funding for VDH for proper implementation.

¹⁰ "Tidewater Virginia" is defined as the following jurisdictions, for purposes of the Act: the Counties of Accomack, Arlington, Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Essex, Fairfax, Gloucester, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Prince George, Prince William, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Westmoreland, and York, and the Cities of Alexandria, Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Hampton, Hopewell, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Richmond, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg. § 62.1-44.15:68.

¹¹ <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2020/RD60>

The Working Group discussed innovative examples of local authorities providing assistance with maintenance of onsite systems. Public Service Authorities (PSA) in Wise and Tazewell Counties help to install onsite systems and collect gray water to treat either at centralized or decentralized wastewater treatment facilities. This decentralized approach can reduce local government costs associated with installing wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure. If the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund provides funding, the cost of septic tanks can be reimbursed, provided the applicant (that is, the PSA) retains responsibility for maintenance.

The Working Group recommended further evaluation of a local or regional authority approach for wastewater management with stakeholders and local governments as it could prove more effective than single homeowner maintained onsite systems. This local or regional authority approach would promote community-based or regional solutions versus site-by-site solutions, and integrate solutions across sewer and onsite systems.

With community systems connecting 10 or more homes, the Working Group discussed barriers to ensuring maintenance of those systems. Without adequate funding and effective management by technical experts, community systems can fail early in the useful life of the system, threatening human health and the environment. Repairs can impose significant costs to homeowners. These community systems are often managed by Homeowners Associations (HOAs). While VDH has authority over the design, construction, and maintenance of these systems, there is limited oversight for ownership-structured, or HOA owned, community systems with less than 50 connections, to ensure long term success. VDH has limited authority to intervene if an HOA fails to maintain a community system or, even worse, abandons their maintenance obligations. *The Working Group recommends engaging local governments and*

other stakeholders on consideration of a requirement for community systems with 10 or more homes to hire a Responsible Management Entity (RME) to provide for management throughout the life of the system, even if the number of homes served falls below 10, and to prohibit HOAs from owning community systems. EPA's [Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered \(Decentralized\) Wastewater Treatment Systems](#) recommends an RME ownership model for community systems in environmentally sensitive areas.¹² RMEs should be required under state code to prepare a business plan with financial assurance provisions for ongoing operation and repair, as needed, of the system. An RME could include regional authorities, such as the Western Virginia Water Authority, or private entities.

For disadvantaged communities with either multiple onsite or community systems, the Working Group recommends providing incentives for RMEs to offer pro bono services.

Technical experts including wastewater treatment system operators, designers, and installers are licensed by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. Authorizing pro bono technical services dedicated to low income communities to meet continuing education credit, or CEC, requirements could offer a “win-win” solution.

To assess the benefits of community or regional solutions over single onsite systems, where feasible, the Working Group acknowledged that the mapping tools described in this report documenting “hot spots” in Virginia’s coastal plain and recording locations with failed septic systems statewide, could provide VDH with the information necessary to determine where community or regional solutions can be prioritized over continued site-by-site repairs.

Augmenting VDH guidelines to recommend use of these tools is warranted. Regional solutions

¹² https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/septic_guidelines.pdf

are likely to be more cost effective and provide enhanced benefits to a community than multiple, often repetitive, on-site solutions and, therefore, should be prioritized where feasible. However, the Working Group found that VDH must have funding to employ interim solutions, such as pump and haul, while a longer term, regional solution is developed.

3. Eliminate Barriers to Fully Utilize Existing Resources and Increase Funding

The Working Group discussed the fact that the Commonwealth lacks sufficient funding to effectively address failing onsite or community sewage systems and small municipal sewer systems. While the Working Group supports additional funding for this critical need, it found that the application of existing state funding programs would be improved through the establishment of clear funding priorities and the requirement to adhere to these priorities in formulating grant decisions. Priorities should be articulated in an Executive Directive and state code establishing the Commonwealth's wastewater strategic policy and, at a minimum, should include the following:

- A. *Proactively direct state funding to resolve the backlog of existing and perpetual community and onsite system needs in disadvantaged communities and households.¹³*
- B. *Where possible, ensure funding programs support the full suite of needs including the maintenance, repair, and replacement of onsite systems and connections to municipal wastewater treatment.*
- C. *Where possible, municipal wastewater system rehabilitation and expansion should be the prioritized solution for long-term sustainability.*

¹³ The Work Group recognizes the need to first prioritize funding to ensure households have safe drinking water.

- D. Prioritize regional solutions over multiple single household or individual community solutions in areas of concern, including extending sewer lines to provide connections for disadvantaged communities.*
- E. Consider the cumulative, long-term costs of multiple onsite repairs and replacements versus the installation of a community-based solution to wastewater treatment needs.*
- F. Where appropriate, provide full funding prior to project construction to eliminate the barrier caused by grant programs that only reimburse homeowners after private funds are expended.*
- G. Maintain multiple state funding programs (described in Appendix B) but call upon program managers to consistently collaborate, coordinating grant requirements and timelines as much as possible. Collaboration with federal and private partners must also be emphasized.*
- H. Utilize information on the backlog of need to consistently advocate to the U.S. Congress for federal resources, including stimulus funding.*

The Working Group documented multiple private, state and federal funding programs that provide support for adequate wastewater treatment (see Appendix B) and can often be combined in support of project planning, design, and construction. These loan and grant programs have differing requirements, timelines, and application procedures that can be difficult to navigate. *The Working Group recommends that VDH work with these private, state and federal funding partners to develop a toolkit for their local health districts' EHS.* The toolkit should provide local VDH staff with funding options available to address onsite and community wastewater needs, train VDH staff on processes for applying for those funds, provide handouts and other outreach tools for VDH staff to use, and identify funding partners to join in support of

wastewater needs. *The Working Group recommends sharing this toolkit with local governments and utilities as well as planning district/regional commissions. Also, the Working Group should explore development of a single, simplified grant or loan application for the multiple state and federal funding programs.* A similar effort has been successful for the Affordable and Special Needs Housing Program administered by DHCD.¹⁴

The Working Group discussed the value of non-state partners in addressing local wastewater needs, and specifically, the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. (SERCAP)¹⁵ which began its efforts in the 1960's to bring safe drinking water to low-income rural residents in the Roanoke Valley. Over the years, SERCAP has expanded its services to include a wide range of financial, technical, and training assistance programs to improve water and wastewater infrastructure throughout the Southeastern United States. SERCAP is frequently the first resource local health department staff identify for low-income residents in need of assistance with onsite sewage system repairs, as they have provided assistance to residents throughout the Commonwealth for many years.

The state budget includes \$1,568,442¹⁶ in DHCD funds to be provided to SERCAP each year for operating costs and water and wastewater grants. However, with the average cost of \$9,500 for a conventional onsite sewage system, and \$27,325 for an alternative onsite sewage system, these funds do not meet the demand for assistance throughout the Commonwealth. SERCAP is a proven partner for wastewater infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth. Beyond current American Recovery Plan Act funding, *the Working Group agrees that providing*

¹⁴ <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/asnh>

¹⁵ <http://sercap.org/>.

¹⁶ The Work Group recommends restoring the unallotted portion of this funding support for SERCAP.

additional funding to established and proven programs is an effective first step in addressing wastewater infrastructure financial assistance needs in the Commonwealth.

The state budget also includes targeted planning and implementation funding to planning district commissions 1, 2 and 3 through DHCD's budget. This is critical funding to meet the needs of a fiscally distressed region, which has helped the local planning district commissions fund strategic initiatives with other agencies and by combining funding sources. This funding is also critical to help with regional planning efforts. *The Work Group recommends maintaining this funding for planning district commissions 1, 2 and 3 and identifying additional fiscally distressed regions for similar assistance.*

Another critical funding program emphasized during the Work Group's discussions is the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program, a self-perpetuating loan fund which provides a low interest financing option to Virginia cities, towns and wastewater authorities for the upgrade, expansion, extension, replacement, repair, rehabilitation, and/or additions to public wastewater collection and treatment facilities. Since 1987 the Virginia RLF Program has provided more than \$4 billion in low-interest loans for wastewater and non-point source projects in Virginia localities. Support has largely been dedicated to municipal wastewater treatment facilities yet funding can be used to repair and replace inadequate community and onsite wastewater treatment systems. As demonstrated by DEQ's pilot program in southwest Virginia, the RLF Program can also support connections of homes with onsite systems to municipal sewer systems.

The Working Group commends DEQ's intention to revitalize the onsite septic component of the Virginia RLF Program, in partnership with VRA, to ensure the Commonwealth is maximizing this program for the benefit of community and onsite wastewater treatment needs.

In a manner similar to DEQ's recent revitalization of the Agricultural BMP Loan Program (also a RLF Program), DEQ will engage stakeholders for input, develop and share revised program guidelines, and seek approval from the State Water Control Board. *The Working Group supports DEQ's continued partnership with local planning district/regional commissions but also recommends engaging new partners such as local community banks.*

The Working Group recommends exploring with local governments and other stakeholders the potential benefits of establishing sanitary districts, authorized under Virginia Code § 21-113, to provide additional avenues to finance, construct, operate and maintain community-wide remedies for failing septic. These districts are able to borrow funds and receive grants from the RLF Program while individuals or private owners (such as HOA's) may not be eligible. In addition, sanitary districts are governed by their local boards of supervisors and, thus, provide greater stability and oversight than private entities. Implementing an incremental assessment or fee structure authorized for a sanitary district would also infuse local funding often necessary to match or supplement state and federal wastewater funds. The Working Group emphasized that establishing a sanitary district may be appropriate in some communities but may not be the right approach for communities with a significant number of low-income households; therefore, economic feasibility must be addressed in any local decision to pursue a sanitary district.

4. Consideration of stakeholder responses during the 2021 regional roundtable session.

The Working Group will take under further consideration the stakeholder responses provided during the three regional roundtable sessions as part of its work in 2022. Several of the stakeholder responses align with recommendations from the Working Group covered in parts 1 through 3 above; such as incorporating an understanding of wastewater treatment in

appropriate public K-12 curricula. Stakeholder responses not currently included in the Working Group's recommendations will be assessed for feasibility and resources needed for proper implementation, and will be presented as future recommendations where agreed upon by the Working Group.

APPENDICES

- A. Joint Letter of Agreement
- B. Funding Sources
- C. SB 1396
- D. Working Group Members
- E. Working Group Guidelines
- F. Working Group 2021 Work Plan

Appendix A
Joint Letter of Agreement

JOINT LETTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SECRETARIES OF NATURAL RESOURCES, HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES, AND COMMERCE AND TRADE

Issue: Inadequate and failing wastewater treatment, whether onsite septic or sewer systems, threatens human health, pollutes the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia rivers, and impedes economic development in the Commonwealth. This is a statewide issue of grave concern. Coordination, alignment, and targeting of state action will ensure that limited state and federal resources deliver the greatest results.

Background: “Wastewater islands,”¹ as defined by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), are areas in Virginia where a higher than average number of individuals within communities do not have access to affordable wastewater solutions protective of health and the environment and/or where a concentration of failing wastewater systems exist. Wastewater islands are found in rural areas with poor soils that do not support adequate septic systems, small lots in urban and suburban communities with older homes that do not have access to centralized sewerage, and rural communities without adequate capacity to properly maintain small sewer systems.

Inadequate or failing wastewater treatment can result in the release of improperly treated human sewage, which exposes citizens to viral and bacterial-caused diseases and infections from contact with contaminated surface and ground waters. Failing onsite septic systems can leach nitrates into groundwater. High levels of nitrates in groundwater pose a risk to people, especially infants, relying on groundwater as a drinking water source. Inadequate or failing wastewater treatment can also severely limit opportunities for economic expansion and growth and jeopardize the shellfish industry and recreational tourism.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates the useful life of an onsite septic system is 15 to 40 years, after which the system fails to provide basic treatment of wastewater inputs. VDH estimates that across the Commonwealth, almost 600,000 of the over one million onsite septic systems are more than 40 years old and were permitted under less stringent regulations than those now in place. A compounding challenge is that many small rural sewer systems in Virginia are in need of improvement and are often not as cost-effective as larger, regional systems.

Already struggling rural and urban communities often lack access to funding and resources to provide for properly functioning wastewater treatment, making this a significant environmental justice concern. The Rural Community Assistance Project reports that in 2000, 1.53% of Black or African American occupied housing units in Virginia lacked complete plumbing facilities, as compared to 0.72% of all occupied housing units².

¹ “Onsite Sewage Systems and Environmental Justice in Virginia,” Danna L. Revis and James L. Gregory, Virginia Department of Health. Wastewater islands are similar to “food deserts.”

² Still Living Without the Basics in the 21st Century. Analyzing the Availability of Water and Sanitation Services in the United States. A Report by the Rural Community Assistance Project

In development of the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), VDH, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) called for establishing a Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group to urgently and intentionally elevate the funding needs necessary to address the Commonwealth's failing wastewater infrastructure. Our agencies seek to coordinate and enhance their ongoing efforts to address these concerns both within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and statewide.

Action: We, therefore, jointly direct establishment of the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group (Work Group) to consist of high-level representatives from the DEQ, VDH, DHCD, and VRA. The Commissioner or Director of each agency shall participate or appoint a representative(s) with decision-making authority.

The purpose of the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group will be to coordinate, align, and capitalize on available state and federal grants and loans to landowners, local governments, and other partners to improve water quality, protect human health, and address the economic disadvantages from inadequate and failing wastewater treatment. By jointly focusing limited public resources on the greatest need and highest impact, the Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group can ensure Virginia citizens receive the most benefit for the investment of public funding.

The Wastewater Infrastructure Work Group will focus on solutions to revitalize distressed communities and provide economic development benefits. These solutions would have the additional benefit of improving ground and surface waters and achieving reductions in nitrogen pollution to the Chesapeake Bay.

We direct the Work Group to convene and address the following tasks and goals:

1. The Work Group shall identify the issues of greatest concern with inadequate and failing wastewater treatment. Each Work Group member shall gather and exchange information of benefit to other members.
2. The Work Group shall make recommendations for the most appropriate, equitable, and feasible approach to identify, quantify, and prioritize wastewater infrastructure needs. These shall include, at a minimum, mapping tools developed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science Center for Coastal Resources Management for Tidewater Virginia, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report, and socio-demographic, economic, and culture factors.
3. Where feasible and equitable, the Work Group shall prioritize solutions within areas of greatest concern and those that provide multiple benefits in the areas of economic development, public health, water quality, Chesapeake Bay restoration, and environmental justice. Solutions may include, but are not limited to, regionalizing wastewater infrastructure and connecting failing septic systems to community onsite septic or sewer systems.
4. The Work Group shall identify overlapping authorities and direct joint efforts where feasible, coordinate each agencies' funding and loan opportunities, align policy

documents and administrative guidelines, and pursue additional funding sources and loans.

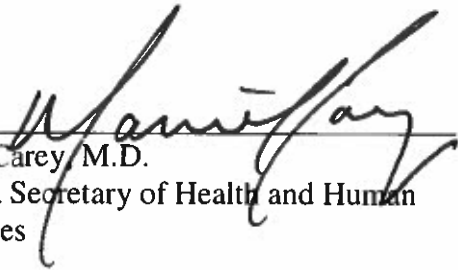
5. The Work Group shall strive to quantify the gap in funding needs as well as identify and make recommendations for amendments to the Code of Virginia to foster implementation of identified solutions.
6. The Work Group shall ensure proposed solutions will increase Virginia's resilience to sea level rise and natural hazards pursuant to Governor Northam's Executive Order Number 24 (2018).
7. The Work Group shall take a proactive approach to engaging with communities identified through their efforts to appropriately, equitably, and feasibly prioritize wastewater solutions and shall recommend means to encourage participation by communities with the greatest needs.

The Work Group shall meet at least quarterly. The Work Group shall periodically brief and seek feedback and expertise from appropriate stakeholders including, but not limited to, those representing local governments, federal agencies, and sewage treatment agencies or organizations.

The Work Group shall report on these efforts at least twice per year to the Secretaries of Natural Resources, Health and Human Resources, and Commerce and Trade. The Work Group may present its finding to Governor Northam's Conservation Cabinet.



Matthew J. Strickler
Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources



Daniel Carey M.D.
Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources



Brian Ball
Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade

Appendix B
Funding Sources

Appendix B

| Source Title | Link | Funding Agency | Funding Source | Eligible Applicants | Grant, Loan, Combination | Recurring or One-time | Total Amount | Limit Per Applicant | Application Deadline | Comments |
|---|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Clean Water Financing & Assistance Program | https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance.aspx | DEQ | On-site local program loan | Municipalities and political subdivisions | Loan | Both | n/a | n/a | July of each year | Loans available to localities and political subdivisions for a local program to loan funds to homeowners for on-site system repair/replacement or connect to POTW |
| Clean Water Act Section 319 Funding - Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants | https://www.adaptationcenter.org/resources/clean-water-act-section-319-grant-program.html | DEQ | Federal | Local governments, county health departments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Planning District Commissions, non-profit environmental organizations, others | Grant | Both | Around \$1.5 million annually | \$300,000 | August of each year | Funding is awarded each year from EPA and made available through a Request for Applications. Local grantees (typically 6-10 each year) then work with homeowners to install or repair septic systems/BMPs. Note that these grants are not exclusive to septic, as they also fund projects that address other pollution sources (agricultural, urban, pet waste, etc.). |
| Water Quality Improvement Fund | https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/WaterQualityImprovementFund(WQIF).aspx | DEQ/DCR | State | Significant dischargers within Ches Bay watershed | Grant | One-time | As appropriated by GA | n/a | n/a | Responses are for WQIF point source funding through DEQ |
| Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation | https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/ipr | DHCD | Federal/State | 8 Sub-Recipients | Forgivable Loans | One-time | Around \$2.3 million annually | \$40,000 - \$120,000 | n/a | Housing Rehabilitation program benefiting low-to-moderate income owner occupants which have no indoor plumbing, including no potable water or a failed septic system. 8 sub recipients deliver the program statewide. |
| Community Development Block Grant - Competitive Fund | https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/cdbg-planning-grants | DHCD | Federal | Localities | Grant | One-time | around \$18 million annually | \$1 million | n/a | Grant is a community based application serving Low-to-Moderate Income households to address a community need. Water and wastewater are one potential use. Applicants must be units of local government. |
| Community Development Block Grant - Construction Ready Fund | https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/cdbg-planning-grants | DHCD | Federal | Localities | Grant | One-time | \$2,500,000 | \$700,000 | n/a | Grant is a community based application serving Low-to-Moderate Income households with an infrastructure project that is shovel ready. Generally not available on a scattered site basis. |
| Community Development Block Grant - Regional Infrastructure Fund | https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/cdbg-planning-grants | DHCD | Federal | Localities | Grant | One-time | \$2,500,000 | \$2,500,000 | n/a | Grant is a regionally based application serving Low-to-Moderate Income households to address a large scale community need. Generally not available on a scattered site basis. |
| Appalachian Regional Commission | https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/arc | DHCD | Federal | Localities, Non-Profits | Grant | One-time | \$2,300,000 | \$500,000 | n/a | Grant must be tied to Economic Development and job creation OR be serving households in an ARC designated distressed area. |
| Jessie Ball duPont Fund | https://www.dupontfund.org/ | Jessie Ball duPont Fund | Private | Churches, schools, cultural organizations | Grants and loans | One-time | | | n/a | The Jessie Ball duPont Fund makes grants to organizations designated in her will. Mrs. duPont, a native of Northumberland County, included as grantees many churches, schools and cultural organizations throughout Virginia and Three Rivers Health District. Grant proposals to the Fund must be made by one of the grantees. A list of grantees is available on the website. |
| Local Government Loans | | Local Governments | Local | | | | | | n/a | 15.2-958.6 allows for localities to "authorize contracts with property owners to provide loans for the repair of septic systems". |
| Betterment loans | https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title32.1/chapter6/section32.1-164.1:2/ | Private financial institutions | Private | Owners deemed eligible by VDH | Loan | Recurring | no limit | no limit | ongoing | Established in section 32.1-164.1:2 of the Code of Virginia. Purpose to allow owner access to lower rate loans for septic system repairs, by placing the septic repair first in line in case of a default on the home. To date VDH is not aware of any private lenders providing betterment loans. |
| Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. (SERCAP) | http://sercap.org/ | SERCAP | Federal and State | Individual and community | Loans and small grants | Recurring | | \$15,000 | n/a | SERCAP's Loan Fund offers affordable Individual Household Well and Septic Loans for low-income homeowners, to help them repair and/or replace their well or septic system. Up to \$11,000 is available for a new well, and up to \$15,000 is available for a septic system. SERCAP also provides small grants through its Essential & Critical Needs program to offset the costs of repairs. |
| SERCAP Community Development Loans | http://sercap.org/services/community-development | SERCAP | Federal and State | Local governments | Loan | Recurring | | \$250,000 | n/a | Can be used for water/wastewater treatment facilities, water storage tank repairs, and community development projects. |
| USDA Rural Development | https://www.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program | USDA | Federal | Homeowners | Loans and grants | Recurring | | \$27,500 | n/a | USDA provides low cost loans and grants to finance drinking water and wastewater disposal systems. |
| Water & Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program | https://www.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program | USDA | Federal | State and local governments, nonprofits, federally recognized tribes. | Combination | Recurring | | | n/a | Designed for rural areas with less than 10,000 people. Funding for households and businesses in eligible rural areas to construct or improve sewer connections, transmission, treatment, and disposal. |
| Loan guarantee program | https://www.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees | USDA | Federal | For-profit businesses. Nonprofits. Cooperatives. Federally-recognized Tribes. Public bodies. | other | Recurring | | loans cannot exceed \$10 million without an exception by the Administrator | n/a | Helps private lenders provide financing to approved borrowers to improve access to waste disposal systems. |
| Predevelopment Planning Grants | https://www.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-predevelopment-planning-grants | USDA | Federal | Most state and local governmental entities Nonprofit organizations Federally recognized tribes | grant | Recurring | | Maximum of \$30,000 or 75 percent of the predevelopment planning costs. | n/a | Helps low income communities initiate the loan/grant and loan guarantee programs. |
| Onsite Operation and Maintenance Fund | https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title32.1/chapter6/section32.1-164.8/ | VDH | State | see comments | | Recurring | Less than \$10,000 | no limit | ongoing | VDH receives a fee of \$1 for all alternative system operation and maintenance reports submitted via the online reporting database. Those funds can be used i) to train operators, and ii) to support the reporting system required by the Code of Virginia. |
| Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund | https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title32.1/chapter6/section32.1-164.1:01/ | VDH | State | Owners with a septic system that fails within 3 years of installation. | | Recurring | Approx. \$400,000 | \$30,000 | ongoing | VDH collects a fee of \$10 for every onsite sewage system applications. That fee is placed into the indemnification fund. Owners of systems that fail within 3 years of installation, that apply for indemnification within 1 year of failure, and that demonstrate VDH negligence cause the failure can receive up to \$30,000 to repair the system. |
| VEE Septic Repair Grant Program | https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/veesepticgrant/ | VEE | Private | Homeowners | Grant | One-time | \$500,000 | \$18,000 | n/a | Grant limited to four watersheds in the Lower James. Grant administered by VDH. |
| Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund | https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/WaterStewardship.aspx | VRA/State Water Control Board | Federal and State | Virginia state government agencies and departments Virginia county, city and town governments Virginia municipal public service authorities Registered (tax exempt) nonprofit organizations that fulfill the "holder" requirements in §10.1-1009 | Loan | One-time | \$80 to \$100 million per year | \$50,000 minimum. Loans may be made for 100% of the eligible costs of the project. | July of each year | |

Appendix C
SB 1396

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

CHAPTER 382

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 32.1-164 and 32.1-164.1:01 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 62.1 a chapter numbered 21.1, consisting of sections numbered 62.1-223.1, 62.1-223.2, and 62.1-223.3, relating to sewage; Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund; Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group; regulations; report.

[S 1396]

Approved March 25, 2021

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 32.1-164 and 32.1-164.1:01 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 62.1 a chapter numbered 21.1, consisting of sections numbered 62.1-223.1, 62.1-223.2, and 62.1-223.3, as follows:

§ 32.1-164. Powers and duties of Board; regulations; fees; onsite soil evaluators; letters in lieu of permits; inspections; civil penalties.

A. The Board shall have supervision and control over the safe and sanitary collection, conveyance, transportation, treatment, and disposal of sewage by onsite sewage systems and alternative discharging sewage systems, and treatment works as they affect the public health and welfare. The Board shall also have supervision and control over the maintenance, inspection, and reuse of alternative onsite sewage systems as they affect the public health and welfare. In discharging the responsibility to supervise and control the safe and sanitary treatment and disposal of sewage as they affect the public health and welfare, the Board shall exercise due diligence to protect the quality of both surface water and ground water. Upon the final adoption of a general Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination permit by the State Water Control Board, the Board of Health shall assume the responsibility for permitting alternative discharging sewage systems as defined in § 32.1-163. All such permits shall comply with the applicable regulations of the State Water Control Board and be registered with the State Water Control Board.

In the exercise of its duty to supervise and control the treatment and disposal of sewage, the Board shall require and the Department shall conduct regular inspections of alternative discharging sewage systems. The Board shall also establish requirements for maintenance contracts for alternative discharging sewage systems. The Board may require, as a condition for issuing a permit to operate an alternative discharging sewage system, that the applicant present an executed maintenance contract. Such contract shall be maintained for the life of any general Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit issued by the State Water Control Board.

B. The regulations of the Board shall govern the collection, conveyance, transportation, treatment and disposal of sewage by onsite sewage systems and alternative discharging sewage systems and the maintenance, inspection, and reuse of alternative onsite sewage systems. Such regulations shall be designed to protect the public health and promote the public welfare and may include, without limitation:

1. A requirement that the owner obtain a permit from the Commissioner prior to the construction, installation, modification or operation of a sewerage system or treatment works except in those instances where a permit is required pursuant to Chapter 3.1 (§ 62.1-44.2 et seq.) of Title 62.1.

2. Criteria for the granting or denial of such permits.

3. Standards for the design, construction, installation, modification and operation of sewerage systems and treatment works for permits issued by the Commissioner.

4. Standards governing disposal of sewage on or in soils.

5. Standards specifying the minimum distance between sewerage systems or treatment works and:

(a) a. Public and private wells supplying water for human consumption,

(b) b. Lakes and other impounded waters,

(c) c. Streams and rivers,

(d) d. Shellfish waters,

(e) e. Ground waters,

(f) f. Areas and places of human habitation,

(g) g. Property lines.

6. Standards as to the adequacy of an approved water supply.

7. Standards governing the transportation of sewage.

8. A prohibition against the discharge of untreated sewage onto land or into waters of the Commonwealth.

9. A requirement that such residences, buildings, structures and other places designed for human occupancy as the Board may prescribe be provided with a sewerage system or treatment works.

10. Criteria for determining the demonstrated ability of alternative onsite systems, which are not

permitted through the then current sewage handling and disposal regulations, to treat and dispose of sewage as effectively as approved methods.

11. Standards for inspections of and requirements for maintenance contracts for alternative discharging sewage systems.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 1 above and Chapter 3.1 of Title 62.1, a requirement that the owner obtain a permit from the Commissioner prior to the construction, installation, modification, or operation of an alternative discharging sewage system as defined in § 32.1-163.

13. Criteria for granting, denying, and revoking of permits for alternative discharging sewage systems.

14. Procedures for issuing letters recognizing onsite sewage sites in lieu of issuing onsite sewage system permits.

15. Performance requirements for nitrogen discharged from alternative onsite sewage systems that protect public health and ground and surface water quality.

16. *Consideration of the impacts of climate change on proposed treatment works based on research and analysis from the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science at The College of William and Mary in Virginia.*

C. A fee of \$75 shall be charged for filing an application for an onsite sewage system or an alternative discharging sewage system permit with the Department. Funds received in payment of such charges shall be transmitted to the Comptroller for deposit. The funds from the fees shall be credited to a special fund to be appropriated by the General Assembly, as it deems necessary, to the Department for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this title. However, \$10 of each fee shall be credited to the Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund established pursuant to § 32.1-164.1:01.

The Board, in its regulations, shall establish a procedure for the waiver of fees for persons whose incomes are below the federal poverty guidelines established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or when the application is for a pit privy or the repair of a failing onsite sewage system. If the Department denies the permit for land on which the applicant seeks to construct his principal place of residence, then such fee shall be refunded to the applicant.

From such funds as are appropriated to the Department from the special fund, the Board shall apportion a share to local or district health departments to be allocated in the same ratios as provided for the operation of such health departments pursuant to § 32.1-31. Such funds shall be transmitted to the local or district health departments on a quarterly basis.

D. In addition to factors related to the Board's responsibilities for the safe and sanitary treatment and disposal of sewage as they affect the public health and welfare, the Board shall, in establishing standards, give due consideration to economic costs of such standards in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.).

E. Further a fee of \$75 shall be charged for such installation and monitoring inspections of alternative discharging sewage systems as may be required by the Board. The funds received in payment of such fees shall be credited to a special fund to be appropriated by the General Assembly, as it deems necessary, to the Department for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section. However, \$10 of each fee shall be credited to the Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund established pursuant to § 32.1-164.1:01.

The Board, in its regulations, shall establish a procedure for the waiver of fees for persons whose incomes are below the federal poverty guidelines established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

F. Any owner who violates any provision of this section or any regulation of the Board of Health or the State Water Control Board relating to alternative discharging sewage systems or who fails to comply with any order of the Board of Health or any special final order of the State Water Control Board shall be subject to the penalties provided in §§ 32.1-27 and 62.1-44.32.

In the event that a county, city, or town, or its agent, is the owner, the county, city, or town, or its agent may initiate a civil action against any user or users of an alternative discharging sewage system to recover that portion of any civil penalty imposed against the owner which directly resulted from violations by the user or users of any applicable federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances.

G. The Board shall establish and implement procedures for issuance of letters recognizing the appropriateness of onsite sewage site conditions in lieu of issuing onsite sewage system permits. The Board may require that a survey plat be included with an application for such letter. Such letters shall state, in language determined by the Office of the Attorney General and approved by the Board, the appropriateness of the soil for an onsite sewage system; no system design shall be required for issuance of such letter. The letter may be recorded in the land records of the clerk of the circuit court in the jurisdiction where all or part of the site or proposed site of the onsite sewage system is to be located so as to be a binding notice to the public, including subsequent purchases of the land in question. Upon the sale or transfer of the land which is the subject of any letter, the letter shall be transferred with the title to the property. A permit shall be issued on the basis of such letter unless, from the date of the letter's issuance, there has been a substantial, intervening change in the soil or site conditions where the onsite sewage system is to be located. The Board, Commissioner, and the Department shall accept evaluations

from licensed onsite soil evaluators for the issuance of such letters, if they are produced in accordance with the Board's established procedures for issuance of letters. The Department shall issue such letters within 20 working days of the application filing date when evaluations produced by licensed onsite soil evaluators are submitted as supporting documentation. The Department shall not be required to do a field check of the evaluation prior to issuing such a letter or a permit based on such letter; however, the Department may conduct such field analyses as deemed necessary to protect the integrity of the Commonwealth's environment. Applicants for such letters in lieu of onsite sewage system permits shall pay the fee established by the Board for the letters' issuance and, upon application for an onsite sewage system permit, shall pay the permit application fee.

H. The Board shall establish a program for the operation and maintenance of alternative onsite systems. The program shall require:

1. The owner of an alternative onsite sewage system, as defined in § 32.1-163, to have that system operated by a licensed operator, as defined in § 32.1-163, and visited by the operator as specified in the operation permit;

2. The licensed operator to provide a report on the results of the site visit utilizing the web-based system required by this subsection. A fee of \$1 shall be paid by the licensed operator at the time the report is filed. Such fees shall be credited to the Onsite Operation and Maintenance Fund established pursuant to § 32.1-164.8;

3. A statewide web-based reporting system to track the operation, monitoring, and maintenance requirements of each system, including its components. The system shall have the capability for pre-notification of operation, maintenance, or monitoring to the operator or owner. Licensed operators shall be required to enter their reports onto the system. The Department of Health shall utilize the system to provide for compliance monitoring of operation and maintenance requirements throughout the state. The Commissioner shall consider readily available commercial systems currently utilized within the Commonwealth; and

4. Any additional requirements deemed necessary by the Board.

I. The Board shall promulgate regulations governing the requirements for maintaining alternative onsite sewage systems.

J. The Board shall establish a uniform schedule of civil penalties for violations of regulations promulgated pursuant to subsection B that are not remedied within 30 days after service of notice from the Department. Civil penalties collected pursuant to this chapter shall be credited to the Environmental Health Education and Training Fund established pursuant to § 32.1-248.3.

This schedule of civil penalties shall be uniform for each type of specified violation, and the penalty for any one violation shall be not more than \$100 for the initial violation and not more than \$150 for each additional violation. Each day during which the violation is found to have existed shall constitute a separate offense. However, specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not be charged more than once in any 10-day period, and a series of specified violations arising from the same operative set of facts shall not result in civil penalties exceeding a total of \$3,000. Penalties shall not apply to unoccupied structures which do not contribute to the pollution of public or private water supplies or the contraction or spread of infectious, contagious, or dangerous diseases. The Department may pursue other remedies as provided by law; however, designation of a particular violation for a civil penalty pursuant to this section shall be in lieu of criminal penalties, except for any violation that contributes to or is likely to contribute to the pollution of public or private water supplies or the contraction or spread of infectious, contagious, or dangerous diseases.

The Department may issue a civil summons ticket as provided by law for a scheduled violation. Any person summoned or issued a ticket for a scheduled violation may make an appearance in person or in writing by mail to the Department prior to the date fixed for trial in court. Any person so appearing may enter a waiver of trial, admit liability, and pay the civil penalty established for the offense charged.

If a person charged with a scheduled violation does not elect to enter a waiver of trial and admit liability, the violation shall be tried in the general district court with jurisdiction in the same manner and with the same right of appeal as provided for by law. In any trial for a scheduled violation, the Department shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence the liability of the alleged violator. An admission of liability or finding of liability under this section shall not be deemed an admission at a criminal proceeding.

This section shall not be interpreted to allow the imposition of civil penalties for activities related to land development.

K. The Department shall establish procedures for requiring a survey plat as part of an application for a permit or letter for any onsite sewage or alternative discharging sewage system, and for granting waivers for such requirements. In all cases, it shall be the landowner's responsibility to ensure that the system is properly located as permitted.

§ 32.1-164.1:01. Onsite Sewage Indemnification Fund.

A. There is hereby created the Onsite Sewage Indemnification ~~fund~~ *Fund*, hereafter referred to as "the Fund," whose purpose is to receive moneys generated by a portion of the fees collected by the Department of Health pursuant to subsections C and E of § 32.1-164 and appropriated by the

Commonwealth for the purpose of assisting any Virginia real property owner holding a valid permit to operate an onsite sewage system when such system or components thereof fail within three years of construction and such failure results from the negligence of the Department of Health. The ~~fund~~ *Fund* may also be used, in the discretion of the Board, to support the program for training and recognition of licensed onsite soil evaluators *and to provide grants and loans to property owners with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines to repair failing onsite sewage systems or install onsite sewage systems on properties that lack adequate sewage disposal. No expenses shall be paid from the Fund to support the program for training and recognition of onsite soil evaluators, or to provide any grant or loan to repair a failing onsite sewage system or install an onsite sewage system on any property that lacks adequate sewage disposal, in lieu of payment to any owner or owners qualified to receive payment from the Fund pursuant to this chapter.*

B. Ten dollars of each fee collected by the Department of Health pursuant to subsections C and E of § 32.1-164 shall be deposited by the Comptroller to ~~this fund~~ *in the Fund* to be appropriated for the purposes of this section to the Department of Health by the General Assembly as it deems necessary.

C. The owner of an onsite sewage system that has been permitted by the Department of Health may cause, by filing a request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* within one year from the date the system or components thereof failed, the Commissioner to review the circumstances of the onsite sewage system failure, if the onsite sewage system has failed within three years of construction. Upon the Commissioner's finding that the onsite sewage system was permitted by the Department and (i) the system or components thereof failed within three years of construction; (ii) that specific actions of the Department were negligent and that those actions caused the failure; and (iii) that the owner filed a request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* within one year from the date the system or components thereof failed, the Commissioner shall, subject to the limitations stated herein, reimburse the owner for the reasonable cost of following the Board's regulations to repair or replace the failed onsite sewage system or components thereof.

D. Prior to receiving payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund*, the owner shall follow the requirements in the Board's regulations to repair or replace the failed onsite sewage system or components thereof.

E. The total amount an owner may receive in payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* shall not exceed \$30,000. Only the costs of the system that failed or the costs of labor and equipment required to repair or replace the failed onsite sewage system or components thereof are reimbursable by the ~~fund~~ *Fund*.

F. If the Commissioner finds that the system was permitted by the Department and has failed within three years of construction and that the failure resulted from faulty construction or other private party error, the Commissioner may assist the owner of the failed system in seeking redress from the system's builder or other private party.

G. Every request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* shall be forever barred unless the owner has filed a complete application as required by the Department. The request shall be filed with the Commissioner within one year from the date that the onsite sewage system or components thereof first failed. However, if the owner was under a disability at the time the cause of action accrued, the tolling provisions of § 8.01-229 shall apply. The owner shall mail the request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* via the United States Postal Service by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the Commissioner.

In any action contesting the filing of the request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund*, the burden of proof shall be on the owner to establish mailing and receipt of the notice in conformity with this section. The signed receipt indicating delivery to the Commissioner, when admitted into evidence, shall be prima facie evidence of filing of the request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* under this section. The request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* shall be deemed to be timely filed if it is sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and if the official receipt shows that the mailing was within the prescribed time limits.

Notwithstanding any provision of this article, the liability for any payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund* shall be conditioned upon the execution by the owner of a release approved by the Attorney General of all claims against the Commonwealth, its political subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities and against any officer or employee of the Commonwealth in connection with or arising out of the occurrence complained of.

H. The Commissioner and the Attorney General shall cooperatively develop an actuarially sound program and policy for identifying, evaluating, and processing requests for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund*.

I. If the Commissioner refuses the request for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund*, the owner may appeal the refusal to the State Health Department Sewage Handling and Disposal Appeal Review Board.

The Board may promulgate regulations pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) for the administration of the ~~fund~~ *Fund* consistent with this chapter.

In the event the ~~fund~~ *Fund* is insufficient to meet requests for payment from the ~~fund~~ *Fund*, this section and the creation of the ~~fund~~ *Fund* shall not be construed to provide liability on the part of the Department or any of its personnel where no such liability existed prior to July 1, 1994.

CHAPTER 21.1.

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY.

§ 62.1-223.1. State policy as to community and onsite wastewater treatment.

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that protects public health and the environment and supports local economic growth and stability. To further this policy, the Commonwealth endorses (i) public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment; (ii) collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines; (iii) the prioritized, focused, and innovative use of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to § 62.1-223.3; (iv) a preference for community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions; (v) the use of integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems; and (vi) the incorporation of the effects of climate change into wastewater treatment regulatory and funding programs.

§ 62.1-223.2. Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group.

A. The Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (the Working Group) is established as an advisory board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100 in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Working Group is to continually assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations.

B. The Working Group shall have a total membership of four ex officio members. The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, the State Health Commissioner, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Resources Authority, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Members of the Working Group shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

C. The Working Group shall invite participation in its meetings by the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, the Virginia Rural Water Association, and SERCAP, Inc.

D. The Working Group shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations.

2. Promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment.

3. Encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines.

4. Endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems.

5. Support prioritized, focused, and innovative use of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to § 62.1-223.3.

6. Prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that protects public health and the environment and supports local economic growth and stability.

7. Support the incorporation of the effects of climate change into wastewater treatment regulatory and funding programs.

8. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. The Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Working Group no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

E. The Secretaries of Natural Resources, Commerce and Trade, and Health and Human Resources shall provide staff support to the Working Group. The Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William and Mary Law School shall advise the Working Group. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Working Group upon request.

F. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 30-19.1:9, the provisions of this section shall expire on July 1, 2030.

§ 62.1-223.3. Wastewater infrastructure needs assessment.

The Department of Environmental Quality (the Department), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health and in consultation with stakeholders, including representatives of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Resources Authority, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, the Virginia Rural Water Association, SERCAP, Inc., local governments, and conservation organizations, shall determine every four years an estimate of the amount of wastewater infrastructure funding that is (i) necessary to implement the policy of the

Commonwealth articulated in § 62.1-223.1 and (ii) not eligible to be covered by grant funding pursuant to the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Act of 1997 (§ 10.1-2117 et seq.). The Department shall report such estimate to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than July 1, 2023, and no later than July 1 every four years thereafter.

2. That the State Board of Health (the Board) shall adopt regulations to implement the requirements of § 32.1-164 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act. If requested by the Board, technical assistance during the regulatory development process shall be provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Environmental Quality.

Appendix D
Wastewater Infrastructure Working Group Members

§ 62.1-223.2. Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group Membership Adopted July 12, 2021

The Working Group shall have a total membership of four ex officio members. The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, the State Health Commissioner, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Resources Authority, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Members of the Working Group shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

VDH

Dr. Norm Oliver, Commissioner

DEQ

David Paylor, Director, DEQ

VRA

Stephanie Hamlett, Executive Director, VRA

DHCD

Jay Grant, Deputy Director of Community Development, DHCD

Matt Weaver, Policy and Legislative Director, DHCD

The Working Group shall invite participation in its meetings by the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (VOWRA), the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (VAMWA), the Virginia Rural Water Association, and SERCAP, Inc.

Virginia Association of Counties - Chris McDonald

Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions - David Blount

USDA Rural Development - Terry Rosta, Perry Hickman

VOWRA - Danna Revis

VAMWA, Chris Pomeroy - Justin Curtis

Virginia Rural Water Association - Mike Ritchie

SERCAP - Hope Cupit, Andy Crocker, Jay Dillon

Virginia Council on Environmental Justice – Reverend Dr. Faith B. Harris

Hampton Roads Sanitation District – Ted Henifin

Virginia Conservation Network - Pat Calvert

Office of the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, Ann Jennings

Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Rachel Becker

Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade

Center for Coastal Resources Management, Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Dr. Kirk Havens

Virginia Coastal Policy Center, William and Mary Law School - Elizabeth Andrews

Virginia Department of Health - Lance Gregory, Julie Henderson, Karri Atwood

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality - Karen Doran

Appendix E
Wastewater Infrastructure Working Group Guidelines

**§ 62.1-223.2. Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group Guidelines
Adopted July 12, 2021**

Authority - From § 62.1-223.2. Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group

A. The Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group (the Working Group) is established as an advisory board within the meaning of § 2.2-2100 in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Working Group is to continually assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations.

B. The Working Group shall have a total membership of four ex officio members. The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, the State Health Commissioner, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Resources Authority, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

C. Members of the Working Group shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office.

D. The Working Group shall invite participation in its meetings by:

1. The Virginia Association of Counties;
2. The Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions;
3. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development;
4. The Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association;
5. The Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies;
6. The Virginia Rural Water Association;
7. SERCAP, Inc; and,
8. Others are determined appropriate by the Working Group.

The Secretaries of Natural Resources, Commerce and Trade, and Health and Human Resources shall provide staff support to the Working Group. The Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William and Mary Law School shall advise the Working Group. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Working Group upon request.

E. Members of the Working Group shall designate the Chair.

F. The Working Group shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Assess wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth and develop policy recommendations.
2. Promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment.
3. Encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines.
4. Endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems.

5. Support prioritized, focused, and innovative use of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to § 62.1-223.3.

6. Prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that protects public health and the environment and supports local economic growth and stability.

7. Support the incorporation of the effects of climate change into wastewater treatment regulatory and funding programs.

8. Submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. The Secretary of Natural Resources shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Working Group no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

G. The Working Group shall meet at least quarterly. The Working Group shall establish its rules of order for the conduct of public meetings.

H. The Working Group shall expire on July 1, 2030.

FOR CONSIDERATION:

The following rules are based, in part, on Robert's Rules of Order and provide common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of all business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership. These rules are intended for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group.

Quorum

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. To the extent provided by law, participation via conference call or video conferencing shall be considered attendance.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be taken and shall include a list of all Working Group and invited participant attendees.

Voting Members and Voting

All members of the Working Group in attendance may vote. A plurality of votes can carry a motion; however, the Working Group will seek to reach decisions based upon a consensus of the members.

The rules of the Working Group can be changed by the voting members.

Proxies

Proxy voting is allowed.

Substitutions

The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, the State Health Commissioner, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Resources Authority, may provide a designee to serve on the Working Group. Designees should be identified in advance of a Working Group meeting.

General Order of Meetings

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Reports
4. Unfinished (Old) Business
5. New Business
6. Discussion
7. Public Comment
7. Adjournment

Deliberations – General Conduct

1. Visitors may address the Working Group when recognized by the Chair during general business deliberations.
2. Speakers must be recognized by the Chair before speaking. Speakers should identify themselves and address matters pertinent to the discussion.
3. Debate on a motion does not begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and called for discussion on the question.
4. Once discussion on the question is called, Working Group members and invited participants may address the Working Group.
5. The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair.
6. The member moving the "immediately pending question" is entitled to preference to the floor.
7. No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once.
8. All remarks must be directed to the Working Group members. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment.

Procedure to Make a Motion

1. Member obtains recognition from the Chair.
2. Member states the motion. e.g. "I move that we _____."
3. Member may give a brief explanation for introducing the motion.
4. Another member must second the motion to continue.
5. The Chair calls for discussion on this motion.

The member who introduced the motion has the right to speak first. Members wishing to discuss the motion raise their hands and wait for recognition from the Chair before speaking, enabling everyone to share their opinions.

6. The Chair calls for a vote on the motion.

7. The Chair states results of vote and resulting action.

Members may "call the question" to end discussion on the motion if discussion seems to be dragging on or becoming redundant; however, it is NOT acceptable to call the question in order to prevent someone from expressing their opinion or while someone is speaking. If a member calls the question, a second and a 2/3 majority vote are required (no discussion) to close discussion and proceed to voting on the motion.

Procedure to Amend a Motion

During discussion, it may become apparent that an amendment (modification) to the original motion is necessary. Anyone may request to amend the original motion, but the proposed amendment must be related to the subject of the main motion.

1. Member obtains recognition from the Chair.

2. Member states the amendment (e.g. striking and/or adding words/phrases).

3. Amendment must be seconded.

4. The Chair calls for discussion on the amendment.

5. The Chair calls for a vote on the amendment, and announces result.

If the amendment passes, the motion on the floor is now the amended motion. If the amendment fails, the original motion remains on the floor.

Tabling a Motion

Tabling a motion lays aside an item of business temporarily in order to attend other business. A tabled motion cannot be taken from the table until another item of business has been transacted since the tabling. If the tabled motion is not removed from the table by the end of the next meeting, the motion ceases to exist.

1. A member makes a motion to table the motion.

2. Motion must be seconded (No discussion).

3. The Chair calls for a vote, and states result of the vote and action taken.

Removing a Motion from the Table

A member may move to remove a motion from the table during the Unfinished Business part of the meeting once all agenda Unfinished Business items are addressed.

1. A member makes a motion to remove a motion from the table.
2. Motion must be seconded.

At this point, the motion has been removed from the table and discussion of the motion proceeds as if the motion had never been tabled in the first place.

3. The Chair calls for discussion.
4. The Chair calls for a vote, and states result of the vote and action taken.

Motion to Postpone

A member may move to delay action (voting) on a motion to a certain time, usually the next meeting. A postponed motion is considered unfinished business and automatically comes up for further consideration at the next meeting (or designated date).

1. A member makes a motion to postpone the motion to another date (usually the next meeting).
2. Motion must be seconded.
3. The Chair calls for discussion.
4. The Chair calls for a vote, and states result of the vote and action taken.

Appendix F
Wastewater Infrastructure Working Group 2021 Work Plan

**§ 62.1-223.2. Wastewater Infrastructure Policy Working Group
2021 Work Plan
Adopted July 12, 2021**

Working Group Meeting #1. July 12, 2021. Review and finalize administrative actions, approve work plan for 2021, presentation on wastewater infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth.

Roundtable Discussion with Working Group Participants facilitated by VDH and OSNR on the following issues:

- A. How to promote public education about the importance of adequate wastewater treatment?
- B. How to encourage collaboration among local, state, and federal government entities, including consistent collaboration and coordination of grant requirements and timelines?
- C. How to endorse community-based and regional projects as opposed to cumulative and repetitive site-by-site individual solutions and integrated solutions across sewer and onsite wastewater treatment systems.
- D. How to support prioritized, focused, and innovative uses of state and federal funding to address needs determined pursuant to the wastewater infrastructure needs assessment required under § 62.1-223.3.

Working Group Meeting #2. Fall, 2021. Consider feedback from roundtable discussion with Working Group Participants and update on the wastewater infrastructure needs assessment required under § 62.1-223.3. Review and discuss initial draft of first annual report for submission to the Governor and General Assembly.

Working Group Meeting #3. Early winter, 2021. Review and approve first annual report for submission to the Governor and General Assembly.

§ 62.1-223.1. State policy as to community and onsite wastewater treatment. It is the policy of the Commonwealth to prioritize universal access to wastewater treatment that protects public health and the environment and supports local economic growth and stability.