



**2020 Legislative Position Statement  
GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA  
CONSERVATION AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) is an active association of 47 Clubs, whose members together form a group of more than 3,300 civic leaders from around the Commonwealth. Guided by its mission statement, the Garden Club of Virginia supports the following positions currently before the 2020 Session of the Virginia General Assembly. Therefore, the Garden Club of Virginia:

**Supports Legislation to Address Climate Change and Recurrent Flooding**

GCV supports efforts to promote control of greenhouse gas emissions as well as investment in coastal resiliency and flood prevention.

GCV supports a carefully considered Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to limit carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from the power sector.

**Supports Legislation to Promote Clean Energy**

GCV supports legislation that encourages carefully sited development of solar, wind and other forms of clean renewable energy in the Commonwealth, including small scale distributed solar.

GCV also supports investments in energy efficiency as a cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Supports Energy Legislation that Conserves and Protects our Natural Resources**

GCV supports the protection of public and private lands from risky fossil fuel development.

**Supports the Protection of Historic Viewsheds**

GCV reiterates that an area's viewshed should be part of any Environmental Impact Review. We are specifically concerned about the viewshed of the Lower James River where transmission lines have been erected.

**Supports Efforts to Protect and Improve Water Quality**

GCV is concerned about the risks of toxic materials polluting our waterways and drinking water.

**1) Supports Managing Polluted Runoff to Protect Virginia's Waterways through:**

- A) The Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) provides matching funds for localities for stormwater improvement projects.
- B) Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Program offers financial and technical support to farmers to implement practices to restore and improve water quality such as stream exclusion systems and cover crops.

**2) Supports Localities' Authority to Capitalize on the Water-Quality Benefits of Trees**

The General Assembly should give localities the authority to increase tree replacement minimums to meet polluted runoff and water quality goals. Trees are a cost-effective way to help absorb polluted storm water run-off and excess agricultural nutrients.

**Supports Legislative Action that Protects and Enhances Virginia State Parks**

The GCV urges members of the General Assembly to fully fund state parks' budget requests.

GCV has a hundred year history of supporting Virginia's State Parks, as they provide not only recreation but environmental education, land conservation and water quality protection as well as the protection of flora and fauna habitat.

### **Supports Legislative Action to Strengthen Land Conservation**

The GCV recommends that the General Assembly secure funding for Virginia Land Conservation Foundation at \$20 million annually.

GCV strives for preservation and beautification of open spaces, historic areas, and environmentally sensitive habitats by promoting responsible, effective land use planning.

### **Billboards**

The Board of Directors of the GCV recommends continued vigilance over the permitting of large roadside advertising, including placement and replacement of these billboards and LED advertising.

### **Opposes Oil and Gas Drilling and Seismic Testing off the Coast of Virginia**

GCV opposes seismic testing, offshore drilling and drilling infrastructure in Virginia Coastal waters. The GCV encourages legislation opposing any offshore drilling activity. We encourage the General Assembly to strengthen policies that protect Virginia's coastal zone from the risks associated with offshore drilling, including protection of Virginia's fisheries, marine life, coastal habitats, and wetlands.

### **Supports Legislative Action Allowing for Control of Proliferation of Disposable Plastic Bags**

GCV continues to support legislation to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags because of the negative impacts on the environment.

### **Supports Environmental Education**

### **Supports Legislation promoting planting of Native plants In Communities**

Native plants and trees help preserve the natural ecosystems that support pollinators and other wildlife, along with preserving ecosystems. Planting natives require less maintenance. We support planting natives along highways and other public areas.