



Virginia Chapter

Virginia Chapter
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TO: Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee
FROM: Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
DATE: January 28, 2015

RE: Support for SB 1428

**Virginia Chapter
Executive Committee**

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www.virginiapediatrics.org

On behalf of the Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am requesting your support for Senate Bill 1428 (McEachin), Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative; Commonwealth Resilience Fund established. This legislation introduces vital protection for children from the impacts of rising global temperatures, worsening storms and rising sea levels.

Global warming is a major threat to the health, safety and security of children in Virginia. As global temperatures rise, many other major changes are occurring, including melting glaciers, worsening storms and rising sea levels. These fundamental changes ultimately impact human health, and children are at particularly high risk.

The Hampton Roads region of Virginia is at particularly high risk from rising sea levels and flooding. A storm surge in this region would present a major threat to children, families and communities. To understand the potential impact of such an event on a large community such as Hampton Roads, we can examine the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the children of New Orleans.

Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, greater than 5,000 children were separated from their families. Over 34,000 calls were made to a special hotline that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children established after the storms and the last missing child was reunited with her family after six months. It is estimated that 400 children and adolescents were rescued from flooded homes, and that 11,000 children were placed in the New Orleans Convention Center and Superdome at some time. Between 200,000 and 300,000 children were evacuated and relocated, temporarily or permanently.

Climate change presents other significant health risks to children. These include increased heat illness, worsening respiratory and allergic disease due to impacts on air quality and plant pollen production, and changes in patterns of climate sensitive infections.

Our nation's leading scientific organizations, including NASA, NOAA, and the American Academy of the Advancement of Science, conclude that it is very likely (95% certainty) that human generated greenhouse gases are the cause of observed climate change. While some uncertainties remain, our children deserve our action on the best available evidence to protect their health, safety, and their future. Please support this legislation, which provides a mechanism for Virginia to offer protection from dangerous climactic changes to our most cherished and vulnerable citizens- our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara L. Kahler".

Barbara L. Kahler, MD, FAAP
President, Virginia Chapter

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