

January 28, 2015  
Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee  
Virginia General Assembly

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists and our **nearly 12,000 supporters** in the Commonwealth of Virginia, I am writing to **express strong support** for S.B. 1428, **the Virginia Coastal Protection Act (VCPA)**.

The bill recognizes that coastal communities in Virginia face serious and increasing risks from flooding and focuses on what can be done about them, specifically addressing the resources these communities need to **protect themselves from current impacts and prepare for even more risks in the future**.

Tidal flooding, **caused by both sinking land and sea level rise**, is becoming more frequent and widespread. [Studies by UCS](#) and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science indicate this situation is only going to get worse. Virginia communities are already struggling to cope with these events on their own. Adaption measures to address these developments are not cheap. A [recent study](#) found that Norfolk alone would need to invest **\$1 billion** to protect its infrastructure from just an additional foot of water.

As legislators, you are well aware that such a sum of money is not easy to come by.

Fortunately, the VCPA offers an **innovative and proven solution**. It enables Virginia to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which consists of nine Mid-Atlantic and Northeast states that have created a **market-based solution** to address power sector carbon emissions **efficiently and cost-effectively**. By joining RGGI, Virginia can draw on the [proven success](#) of these states. The bill wisely proposes auctioning off 100 percent of the emissions permits, potentially generating **\$200 million per year in revenue** for the people of Virginia. The revenue would be used to create the “Commonwealth Resilience Fund” providing desperately needed resources for cities, localities, and municipalities to invest in:

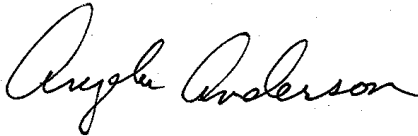
- Adaptation and resilience efforts, such as **building floodwalls, raising roads, and improving storm-water management**;
- Energy efficiency and conservation measures, at least half of which would be **set aside for low and moderate income Virginia families**;
- Renewable energy resources like wind and solar;

- Economic development and workforce training programs in southwest Virginia aimed at **revitalizing communities hard hit by the decline of fossil fuel production.**

By bringing Virginia into RGGI and joining neighboring states, the Virginia Coastal Protection Act would attack the problem from both ends: investing **to cut the carbon emissions** that fuel sea level rise, and investing **in efforts to manage the challenges** we know will come in the meantime.

You have a **rare opportunity** here to solve multiple problems at once. The Virginia Coastal Protection Act generates new revenue for the Commonwealth, to be used not only for **protecting coastal communities**, but also for **expanding clean energy** and **revitalizing fossil-dependent communities**, all while reducing carbon emissions. We believe this is a smart policy move for Virginia, and we stand ready as resources to help guide your deliberation on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Ledford Anderson  
Director, Climate and Energy Program  
Union of Concerned Scientists