



2020 JAMES RIVER AGENDA

Essential Actions for Our Most Essential Resource

According to the 2019 State of the James report, our river's overall score remained steady at 60% and a grade of B-minus. Given the record rains of 2018, this is a positive sign for the resilience of the James River. We should be proud of the progress we have made in changing our actions to protect the James. Still, major room remains for improvement. We call upon Virginia's leaders to provide the policies and funding necessary to fully restore the James to a Grade-A river and deliver clean water for local communities.

Clean Water and Conservation Funding

Virginia's newest Cleanup Plan provides a blueprint for achieving a Grade-A James River by 2025. It challenges everyone to do their part to restore our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, and it calls for major state investments in the good work that farmers, urban communities, and wastewater treatment plants are already doing to reduce pollution and conserve our natural resources. Governor Northam and the General Assembly can show their support for the Cleanup Plan by providing the following in Virginia's 2021-2022 Budget.

- **\$100 million per year for Virginia's Agricultural Cost Share Program** to put more conservation practices like livestock exclusion fencing and cover crops on the ground.
- **\$80 million per year for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund** to help communities reduce runoff pollution and prevent flooding.
- **\$55 million per year for wastewater treatment upgrades** to employ the latest technology and prepare for a growing population.
- **\$20 million per year for land conservation grant programs** to protect open, green spaces that filter water and promote public access.

Preventing Hazardous Chemical Spills

Throughout Virginia, thousands of manufacturers and other businesses store potentially hazardous chemicals in above-ground storage tanks. Virginia does not have comprehensive safety regulations for these chemical storage tanks, even though strong regulations for certain petroleum storage tanks have been in effect since 1998. Spills from both types of tanks pose substantial risk of harm to public health and natural resources, including sources of drinking water like the James River, particularly as we face rising flood risks from storms and sea level rise.

- **Virginia needs a strong regulatory program for above-ground tanks storing hazardous chemicals that requires registration, reporting, safety specifications, and spill prevention and response planning.**