

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD BALANCE

House Bill 1829, by Delegate Ed Scott

The Home Builders Association of Virginia would appreciate your support for House Bill 1829. The measure has been assigned to the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee.

During the 2004 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, the responsibility for the Virginia Stormwater Management Program was transferred to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board at the Department of Conservation and Recreation. At the same time, the Board was authorized to delegate their stormwater management authority to approved localities.

Since 2004, the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Board have been developing state regulations to modify (strengthen) the Virginia Stormwater Management Program and to delegate their stormwater management authority to localities. That regulation will be completed no later than December 31, 2011.

Delegate Ed Scott has introduced **House Bill 1829** to the 2011 State legislature to add 3 new members to that Board that can fairly represent business or local government interest, through education, training or experience, and would remove the DCR Director as a voting member of the Board. The Director and Secretary of Natural Resources have approved the proposed legislation. The size of the Board would increase from 10 members to 12 members.

Currently the Board is composed of the DCR Director, 2 at-large members that have a demonstrated interest in natural resource conservation and water quality protection, 4 farmers, 2 representatives of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 1 additional at-large member.

With the December 31, 2010 adoption of the TMDL for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and the Virginia Watershed Implementation Plan, submitted by the Commonwealth to the EPA to enable Virginia to comply with the TMDL, business and local governments will be significantly impacted. It is only fair for both to have a voice on the Board that will adopt and administer the new stormwater management regulations that must be completed by year end.

Stormwater management and administration is very complex, and typically requires an engineering degree or equivalent training and experience to fully grasp its impact on water quality and the business climate in Virginia. The current Board lacks such education, training and experience in this new and evolving period, as Virginia attempts to implement compliance with the new EPA-TMDL over the next 15 years. **House Bill 1829** will only bring better balance to the current Board and allow more informed decisions to be made on this important issue.

HBAV would greatly appreciate your support for House Bill 1829, which will bring fairness for business and local government interests, and more Balance on the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.