

PROPOSED NEW PRIORITY SECTION/ITEMS FOR THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA'S 2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

Climate Change and the Environment

The City supports legislation to allow Virginia to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Language included in the budget bill approved by the 2019 General Assembly restricted the Commonwealth's ability to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) — a critical avenue for reducing carbon emissions in the Commonwealth and addressing the negative effects of climate change, which is impacting the health and safety of people who live, work, and visit our community and our Commonwealth.

RGGI is an effective, market-based program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation by limiting CO₂ emissions from coal and other fossil-fuel generation sources and incentivizing renewable energy resources like wind and solar to create a cleaner power sector. Moreover, RGGI generates revenue through auctioning CO₂ allowances and reinvesting proceeds in energy efficiency, renewable energy, low-income weatherization, and related energy reduction opportunities. RGGI has been effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving energy efficiency and energy affordability in nine New England and Mid-Atlantic states for the nearly a decade.

The City supports legislation to allow Virginia to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The City supports legislation to transition the statewide electricity supply to carbon-free sources.

Electricity represents 42% of Alexandria's greenhouse gas emissions according to the most recent greenhouse gas inventory performed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. To meet the City's target of reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 50% compared to 2005 levels by 2030 the City supports legislation that would establish a mandatory Clean Energy Standard for electric utilities in the Commonwealth that would require 80% of electricity to be supplied from carbon-free sources and would establish an energy efficiency portfolio standard to reduce demand.

As an alternative, or in combination with the above proposal, the City would support legislation that gives local governments control over their electricity supply choices, giving the City the authority to purchase an electricity portfolio on behalf of residents and businesses that is consistent with the City's greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The City supports legislation to accelerate the electrification of transportation.

On-road transportation represents 30% of Alexandria’s greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to the City’s efforts to expand transit infrastructure and create more walkable and bikeable communities, greenhouse gas emissions from transportation can be reduced by switching from gasoline or diesel to electricity, especially in conjunction with policies that decarbonize the electricity supply. The City supports legislation that would establish a Low Carbon Fuel Standard – which prioritizes transportation electrification – that targets a 20% reduction in carbon intensity from transportation by 2030.

Since a significant portion of road use in the City is pass-through traffic, statewide and regional approaches are needed. The City supports measures that would accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles including statewide and integrated regional planning efforts and funding for statewide and regional consumer awareness campaigns and the installation of charging infrastructure at workplaces and in multi-unit dwellings.

The City supports legislation that would encourage more energy efficient buildings and reduce natural gas use in buildings.

A successful strategy to combat climate change must consider residential and commercial buildings, which are responsible for almost 40% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.

Because the energy demands of buildings are so large, designing and constructing energy efficient buildings can lead to large and vital reductions in energy consumption. In addition, combustion of fossil fuels in residential and commercial buildings represents 15% of Alexandria’s greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from natural gas used for heating, hot water, and cooking applications.

The City supports legislation that would increase overall efficiency of residential and commercial buildings and accelerate the adoption of electric equipment and appliances for these applications.