

William & Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review

Volume 1 (1975-1976)
Issue 1 *Environmental Practice News*

Article 5

November 1975

Virginia Environmental Agencies: The Council on the Environment

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmelpr>



Part of the [Environmental Law Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Virginia Environmental Agencies: The Council on the Environment, 1 Wm. & Mary Envtl. L. & Pol'y Rev. 6 (1975), <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmelpr/vol1/iss1/5>

Copyright c 1975 by the authors. This article is brought to you by the William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository.

<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmelpr>

**VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES:
THE COUNCIL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

The practicing attorney may well face an information crisis when confronted with a matter concerning the environment. Often the federal agencies are thought of as the source of information for the resolution of these matters. However, in Virginia, nearly a score of State agencies have major environmental responsibilities and coordinate many federal programs. At the hub of Virginia's environmental activity is the Council on the Environment in the Office of the Governor.

Created by the Virginia Environmental Quality Act, the Council has the duty of implementing the policy of that act, which is to promote the wise use of the Commonwealth's air, water, land, and other natural resources, and to protect them from pollution, impairment, or destruction, so as to improve the quality of the environment. (Va. Code § 10-179.) Specifically, the Council undertakes four broad tasks. First, it holds public hearings annually and publishes reports, issued to the Governor and available for purchase to the public, on the state of the environment. Second, the Council advises the Governor, the General Assembly, and other officers and public bodies regarding action and programs designed to enhance effectively Virginia's environmental quality. Third, through the public hearings held throughout the Commonwealth, the Council affords all citizens an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding the environment. Finally, it initiates and supervises programs designed to educate citizens regarding environmental problems generally and these problems' solutions.

Organizationally, the Council is composed of ten members, drawn from the public and several State agencies, and an administrator. It is required to meet at least once every three months. A copy of the proceedings is kept on file at the Council and is open to public inspection.

The administrator's post is a full-time position, with the duties of developing uniform management and administrative systems for State environmental services, and of coordinating efficiently the administrative practices within and among the boards and agencies of the Commonwealth. His duties further include the joint preparation of environmental agencies' budgets and reports. Additionally the Council administrator is responsible for coordination of State and federal activities. Thus the Council's responsibilities range from the permit review process to funding and research programs. Paramount is the monitoring of the preparation, review, and evaluation of environmental impact statements for all projects in Virginia. Since 1973 the Council has had the responsibility for coordinating environmental review of over 120 federally funded or licensed projects and 80 State projects.

Information regarding environmental affairs can be obtained by contacting Gerald P. McCarthy, Administrator, and Susan T. Wilburn, Environmental Impact Statement Coordinator, Council on the Environment, 903 Ninth Street Office Building, Richmond, Virginia 23219; telephone, (804) 770-2189.