2020 REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Funding, Revenue & Taxation

The WPPDC opposes any legislation intended to restrict or limit local government taxing authority including the Business/ Professional /Occupational License (BPOL) Tax.

The WPPDC supports legislation allowing Virginia counties to increase meals tax levies up to the 8% maximum rate currently permitted cities and towns. Additionally, the WPPDC supports allowing counties to either adopt a new meals tax, or increase an existing tax without a referendum as cities and towns are permitted.

The WPPDC supports repeal of the 2017 amendment (SB 1296) to the Code of Virginia 58.1-3833(County Food & Beverage Tax) establishing a 3 year ballot question moratorium following a failed local food & beverage tax referendum.

The WPPDC supports the elimination of state exemptions limiting the amount of local machinery and tool taxes which may be collected on solar power farm equipment and facilities.

The WPPDC supports the creation of a sustainable approach to address funding and service delivery of at-risk youth services under the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) to stem ever burgeoning local government costs.

Education

The WPPDC supports the state fully funding the Standards of Quality recommended by the State Board of Education and the Standards of Accreditation.

Regional Cooperation

The WPPDC supports increased state funding for the Commonwealth’s 21 planning districts to further their vital mission to promote collaborative approaches to issues which are regional in scope.

Economic Development

The WPPDC supports state economic development policies and programs supporting local and regional development efforts by maintaining and creating new and flexible
funding resources to promote local and regional initiatives including, but not limited to, the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID

WPPDC supports federal and state programs and appropriate incentives to assist localities in fostering the availability of workforce housing in the region.

**Transportation**

The WPPDC supports sustainable state funding for Smart Scale and other state programs necessary to support critical long term transportation investments to facilitate economic prosperity in the West Piedmont Region.

The WPPDC supports the creation of a new inland port in Southern Virginia to facilitate the timely transport of goods from the region’s business community and the attendant economic development impact such a facility would create in the region.

**Workforce Development**

The WPPDC supports the Commonwealth continuing to replicate on a state wide basis the model created by the Dan River Region Collaborative (DRRC) in the Counties of Halifax, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and the Cities of Danville and Martinsville for employees and job candidates to earn the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and for communities to achieve the Certified Work Ready Community (CWRC) designation. The DRRC program is the first in Virginia to pursue the CWRC designation and also the first in the nation to implement this effort in a rural region.

The WPPDC supports federal/state funding and program initiatives to address the opioid crisis by targeting prevention, treatment, recovery and workforce re-entry support programs.

**Broadband**

WPPDC urges the Commonwealth and the federal government to assist communities in efforts to deploy universal affordable access to the internet in underserved areas.

WPPDC advocates continued state support of local and regional authorities created under the Virginia Wireless Service Authorities Act, Virginia Resources Authority, and other favorable financing mechanisms for broadband projects. Assistance should include economic incentives, along with budgetary and statutory policies facilitating broadband deployment and adoption.

The WPPDC opposes mandates restricting local land use authority over the siting of telecommunications infrastructure.

**Law Enforcement Funding**

The WPPDC advocates state funding support for local law enforcement personnel at a level adequate to enable localities to retain experienced personnel in a market including competition from both the Virginia state police and North Carolina law enforcement agencies.

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