



GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

Our mission is to conserve the gifts of nature, to restore and preserve historic landscapes of the Commonwealth, to cultivate the knowledge and love of gardening, and to lead future generations to build on this heritage.

GCV Positions on 2025 Legislative Issues

Garden Club of Virginia is an active association of 48 clubs comprised of 3,400 civic leaders from across the Commonwealth. Guided by its mission statement, GCV strives for equitable community funding allocation and recommends attention to the following issues currently before the 2025 Session of the Virginia General Assembly:

Conservation and Protection of our Natural Resources

GCV supports protection of public and private lands from negatively impactful fossil fuel development and other pollutants, including light and noise. Environmental protections must be safeguarded and strengthened as the Commonwealth's economic and energy needs escalate.

Mining

Virginia has no effective regulations controlling hard rock mining (the extraction of minerals such as gold and pyrites). Many abandoned mines need reclamation, and, without regulation, pose a threat to public health, water quality and supply, and other natural resources. Until the General Assembly creates an effective regulatory framework, GCV opposes the issuance of new permits for large-scale mining, including uranium mining.

State Parks and Regional Recreational Trails.

As an early petitioner for state parks, beginning in 1929, GCV continues to urge full budget funding to maintain and improve state parks, protect their biodiversity, and encourage equitable access for all citizens. GCV also supports increasing biking and walking pathways throughout the Commonwealth.

Climate Change and Recurrent Flooding

Climate change causes increased air and water temperatures and increased intensity of storms and rainfall. Resultant rising sea levels pose a significant threat to coastal Virginia. Increased levels of air pollutants cause all waterways in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to become more acidic and thus harmful to marine life. Given the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, states are now the primary protectors of their wetlands. GCV supports reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investing in coastal resiliency and flood protection, and expanding regulations to protect wetlands.

GCV urges support of the Commonwealth's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to limit carbon dioxide emissions and provide funds for mitigation efforts.

Protection and Improvement of Water Quality

Research shows the devastating human and environmental impacts of PFAS and other pollutants. GCV supports eliminating these pollutants at their sources and shifting the cost for clean-up from the community taxpayer to the producer of these pollutants in order to protect Virginia's waterways and drinking water. GCV encourages implementation plans that ensure the conservation and restoration of critical watersheds. Further, GCV is concerned about the withdrawal of water from Virginia's rivers and waterways and urges studying the impact of cumulative water withdrawals and regulations to limit its negative impacts.

Plastics

GCV supports policies to decrease and prevent the proliferation of plastic waste in waterways and landfills.

Land Conservation

GCV strives for preservation and beautification of open spaces, public and historic areas, and environmentally sensitive habitats by promoting responsible, sustainable land use. GCV recommends that the General Assembly establish a source of ongoing dedicated funding for the Virginia Land Conservation Grant Programs for preservation of land, farmland and battlefields, and protection of the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC).

Viewshed Protection

GCV recommends continued vigilance over the placement/replacement/maintenance/permitting of large roadside advertising, including LED advertising, as well as the placement and construction of large transmission lines, solar fields, and wind turbines.

Education, Community Engagement, and Tree Planting

GCV promotes funding programs for environmental education. GCV supports enacting state statutes and local ordinances that enable communities to create and care for green spaces and public landscapes. GCV supports efforts to increase the urban tree canopy to cool our cities, handle storm water, and sequester carbon to combat climate change.

Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are a significant threat to the environment, impacting native species, habitat, and fragile ecosystems. GCV supports funding for control and removal of non-native invasive plants, discourages their sale and use, and supports funding for promoting the increased use of native plants.

Clean Energy

GCV supports legislation that encourages sensitively sited solar, wind, and other forms of clean and renewable energy in the Commonwealth.

GCV is concerned about data center construction and the associated resource requirements in environmentally or culturally significant or fragile areas.

The General Assembly is urged to encourage regional efforts to allocate a higher percentage of regional transportation revenues to mass transit and rail.