



*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 2026 Legislative Issues

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) is an active association of 48 member clubs comprised of 3,400 civic leaders from across the Commonwealth. Guided by its mission statement, GCV urges equitable community funding allocation and respectfully commends the following issues currently before the Virginia General Assembly:

CONSERVE

Land Conservation

GCV supports the preservation and beautification of open spaces, historic areas, and environmentally sensitive habitats by advocating for responsible, sustainable land use policies. GCV recommends that the General Assembly establish a dedicated, ongoing funding source for the Virginia Land Conservation Grant Programs to preserve land and to protect the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC).

Protection of our Natural Resources

GCV supports the protection of public and private lands from the impacts of 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.

Clean Energy, Development and Grid Capacity

GCV supports continued implementation of the Virginia Clean Economy Act which reduces air pollution by encouraging the transition to clean energy. GCV encourages sensitively sited solar, wind, and other forms of clean and renewable energy to build grid capacity within the Commonwealth.

GCV supports the Commonwealth's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to limit carbon dioxide emissions and provide funds for flood mitigation.

GCV urges thoughtful regulation of large-load development to guide the siting and construction of facilities such as data centers, which place substantial demands on land, energy, and water. Permitting decisions should also account for environmental impacts and viewshed protection.

Mining

GCV opposes the issuance of new permits for large-scale mining, including uranium, minerals, and metals absent effective regulatory frameworks that include environmental protection and remediation. GCV urges completion of coal mine clean-up and reclamation on existing surface mines.

RESTORE

Native v. Invasive Plants and Trees

Invasive plants pose a serious threat to Virginia's environment by displacing native species, degrading habitats, and disrupting fragile ecosystems. GCV opposes the sale and use of invasive plants and supports both their control and removal. GCV further recommends amending Virginia's Noxious Weed Law to cover invasive plants regardless of "commercial viability" and adding invasive species to the Virginia Pest Law.

GCV urges support for Virginia's native plant growers and nurseries and encourages the expansion of these agribusinesses across the Commonwealth.

GCV supports efforts to increase the urban tree canopy to cool our cities, handle storm water, and sequester carbon to combat climate change. GCV further supports efforts to protect mature trees from invasive vines and other threats.

Protection and Improvement of Water Quality

Access to clean water is essential. GCV supports the implementation of plans that ensure the conservation and restoration of critical watersheds and urges support for the creation of regional water supply plans to provide basin-wide cumulative water management.

GCV supports eliminating PFAS and emerging pollutants at their source and removing them from discharges. GCV supports further investment in Virginia's wastewater treatment infrastructure to prevent pollution that comes from sewer and septic systems.

Soil Health

Healthy soil is one of Virginia's most valuable natural resources and an important component of water quality. GCV supports full implementation of agricultural management best practices, testing for PFAS in land applied sewage sludge (biosolids) or preventing its use in order to protect Virginia's working farmlands.

Climate Change and Recurrent Flooding

GCV supports reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investing in coastal resiliency and flood protection, and expanding regulations to protect and improve Virginia's wetlands. As a part of these efforts, GCV urges continued investment in stormwater management systems across the state and full implementation of Virginia's Coastal Resilience Master Plan Phase 2 and statewide Flood Protection Master Plan.

PRESERVE

Viewshed Protection

GCV recommends continued vigilance over the placement, replacement, maintenance and permitting of large roadside advertising, including LED advertising, as well as the placement and construction of large transmission lines, solar fields, wind turbines, and data centers. GCV recommends continued close oversight and transparency in permitting for these structures.

Plastics

GCV supports policies to decrease/prevent the proliferation of plastic waste in waterways and landfills. As part of GCV's on-going "Refuse to Use Single Use Plastics" pledge, GCV supports efforts to extend producer responsibility, encourage recycling and reduce landfill waste. GCV also supports efforts to stop the discharge of pre-production plastic pellets into Virginia's waterways.

CULTIVATE

State Parks and Regional Recreational Trails.

GCV urges robust funding levels for maintaining, improving, and expanding the Commonwealth's state parks and trails, including programs to protect biodiversity and ones which encourage equitable access for all Virginia's citizens.

LEAD

Education and Community Engagement

GCV promotes funding programs for environmental education.

GCV supports statutes and local ordinances that enable communities to create and care for green spaces and public landscapes. Further, GCV supports efforts to ensure that Homeowner Associations provide opportunities for and do not limit the use of environmentally effective landscaping such as the inclusion of native plants, rain gardens, and tree planting.