COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Executive Department

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE 3 (2026)

DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES TO JOIN THE U.S. CLIMATE ALLIANCE ON BEHALF OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a vested interest in protecting its atmosphere, lands, and waters for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people. Every Virginia resident has the inalienable right to benefit from and enjoy the lands, waters, and air of the Commonwealth, but Virginians' access to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is under threat from climate change.

Sea-level rise and recurrent flooding due to increased storm frequency and intensity leave many communities vulnerable. According to the 2024 Virginia Institute of Marine Science Sea-Level Report Card, the 2050 sea-level in Hampton Roads is projected to be more than a foot and a half above current mean sea-level. Other impacts include the expanding range of infectious diseases, disruptions due to food security, and increased deaths due to extreme weather driven by higher temperatures. Indeed, the average annual temperatures in Virginia have risen by 2.7 °F between 1970 and 2023.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is key to slowing, and eventually stopping, the impacts of climate change. Virginia has already taken important steps toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including passing the Virginia Clean Economy Act, re-entering the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("RGGI"), expanding the network of electric vehicle charging stations, and investing in solar, nuclear, offshore wind, and energy storage. Accelerating our efforts towards cleaner air together with reliable and affordable clean energy generation is critical for improved resilience against the impacts of climate change. Virginia has also long been a leader in protecting natural lands and habitats that are essential to support critical ecosystem services such as air and water purification, in addition to sequestering carbon.

Together, these efforts make life more affordable for Virginians by harnessing homegrown clean energy, boosting efficiency, investing in innovation, and reducing the human and economic harms of climate change. The Commonwealth must continue to take available

actions to protect our vulnerable populations through increased climate resilience while fostering economic growth, energy savings, and job creation. The U.S. Climate Alliance, launched in 2017 by a bipartisan coalition of governors, exists to pursue those same goals through a collaborative, partnership-focused process.

Directive

Accordingly, I hereby direct the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources to join the U.S. Climate Alliance on behalf of the Commonwealth to ensure Virginia has access to accurate, up-to-date best practices for combating climate change while growing Virginia's economy and workforce.

I further direct the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources to regularly consult with my Cabinet and the Office of the Governor to ensure the Commonwealth is maximizing all the benefits of its membership in the U.S. Climate Alliance, including accessing technical, analytical, policy, and capacity assistance programs.

Effective Date of the Executive Directive

This Executive Directive shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive directive.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia this 22nd day of April 2026.

Abigail D. Spanberger, Governor

Attest:

Candi Mundon King, Secretary of the Commonwealth