# Commission on Local Government

# Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

**2026 General Assembly Session | 01/16/26**

In accordance with the provisions of 30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of legislation impacting local governments.

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**HB 277: Zoning; wireless communications infrastructure; application process (Patron: Seibold )**

**Bill Summary:** Provides that in its consideration of certain communications infrastructure applications, no locality shall disapprove an application if (i) the proposed new wireless support structure provides additional wireless coverage or capacity for first responders or schools or (ii) the proposed new wireless support structure is not within a four-mile radius of an existing wireless support structure, unless such disapproval is otherwise authorized by law. The bill also increases from 50 feet to 150 feet above ground level the minimum height at which a locality may disapprove certain applications for any zoning approval required for non-administrative review-eligible projects on the basis of the proposed height of any wireless support structure, wireless facility, or wireless support structure with attached wireless facilities exceeding such height.

**Local Fiscal Impact: Net Additional Expenditure:___x___ Net Reduction of Revenues: ___x___**

**Summary Analysis:**

**Number of Localities Responding: 7 Cities, 15 Counties, 1 Town, 1 Other**

Localities estimated a negative fiscal impact ranging from $2000 to $25,000 over the biennium.

Localities identified the bill's fiscal impact as minimal in relation to increased expenditures and decreased revenues, while many expressed no fiscal impact. For the localities that identified projected increased expenditures, the cost is associated with zoning amendments. While many localities expressed concern about a lack of discretion in approving wireless towers, one locality stated that it may reduce overall expenditures by eliminating the need to hire communications tower consultants to review applications.

A locality identified a $10,000 revenue decrease resulting from the elimination of the need for a special-use permit.

# Commission on Local Government

## Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities

| Locality | Juris | Recurring Expense-Personnel | | Recurring Expense - Operating | | Recurring Expense - Capital | | Recurring Expense - Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 |
| Albemarle County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Alleghany County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Augusta County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Bedford County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Chesterfield County | County | | | | | | | | |
| City of Alexandria | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Chesapeake | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Norfolk | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Poquoson | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Richmond | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Virginia Beach | City | | | | | | | | |
| City of Winchester | City | | | | | | | | |
| Roanoke County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Dickenson County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Fairfax County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Fauquier County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Hanover County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Mecklenburg County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Montgomery County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Northern Neck PDC | Other | | | | | | | | |
| Prince George County | County | | | 25000 | | | | | |
| Pulaski County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Rappahannock County | County | | | | | | | | |
| Town of Chincoteague | Town | | | | | | | | |

## Net Increase in Expenditures: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities

| Locality | Nonrecurring Expense - Operating | | Nonrecurring Expense - Capital | | Nonrecurring Expense - Other | | Total Increase in Expenses (Biennium Total) | Response Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | | |
| Albemarle County | 2000 | 2000 | | | | | 4,000 | Cities: 7 |
| Alleghany County | | | | | | | 0 | Counties: 15 |
| Augusta County | | | | | | | 0 | Towns: 1 |
| Bedford County | | | | | | | 0 | Other: 1 |
| Chesterfield County | | | | | | | 0 | Total: 24 |
| City of Alexandria | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Chesapeake | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Norfolk | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Poquoson | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Richmond | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Virginia Beach | | | | | | | 0 | |
| City of Winchester | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Roanoke County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Dickenson County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Fairfax County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Fauquier County | 2000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 | |
| Hanover County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Mecklenburg County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Montgomery County | 5000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,000 | |
| Northern Neck PDC | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Prince George County | | | | | | | 25,000 | |
| Pulaski County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Rappahannock County | | | | | | | 0 | |
| Town of Chincoteague | | | | | | | 0 | |

| Locality | Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities |
|---|---|
| Albemarle County | This bill may result in a decrease in recuring costs to the County because the bill reduces the regulating authority of the County. The decrease in review time would still be minor. The County would need to amend the zoning ordinance to conform with the bill at minimal cost to the County. All work would be done by existing staff. |
| Alleghany County | |
| Augusta County | The first responder and school provision would essentially negate any ability of a local government to regulate as it would be extremely difficult to demonstrate that a tower would not provide additional wireless coverage or capacity for first responders. |
| Bedford County | |
| Chesterfield County | The proposed legislation is not anticipated to have a revenue/expenditure impact. |
| City of Alexandria | The legislation's fiscal impact is currently unquantifiable. |
| City of Chesapeake | The standard processing cost of these types of applications will not be impacted by the legislation and are somewhat offset by an application fee. |
| City of Norfolk | The policy changes can be absorbed by existing city staff and resources. No significant fiscal impact is expected. |
| City of Poquoson | Change to practice but no additional man powers based on the change proposed. |
| City of Richmond | Should not create any fiscal impact for the City of Richmond because the applicant will cover the costs of the project approved. |
| City of Virginia Beach | No budgetary implications expected. |
| City of Winchester | |
| Roanoke County | This bill would only change the administrative process. |
| Dickenson County | |
| Fairfax County | This bill does not have a fiscal impact. However, it should be noted that the bill would potentially make it almost impossible to deny any wireless application. |
| Fauquier County | "no locality shall disapprove an application if (i) the proposed new wireless support structure provides additional wireless coverage or capacity for first responders or school would apply to every wireless structure. |
| Hanover County | This bill will impact County ordinances but we don't expect an increase in expenditures as a result |
| Mecklenburg County | This bill would likely serve as a cost reduction. Presently, the County contracts with an external communications consultant firm to provide an analysis of tower applications. Without the discretion to disapprove a project, the County would not need to refer as many projects to the consultant, and therefore, would incur less costs. If our zoning ordinance was amended to make more applications by-right due to the changes proposed by this bill, we would likely have a decrease in expenditures related to a reduction in advertising costs. Taken together, it is the cost decrease may amount to between $0 and $20,000 per year (depending on the rate of applications and if the proposed towers fall under the provisions in the proposed legislation or not. |

| Locality | Expenditure Narrative by Responding Localities |
|---|---|
| Montgomery County | Staff hours required to process an amendment to County Code. Estimated number of hours is around 30-35 with at least 2-3 staff members working on the project. Pay ranges between $30-$40 per hour.<br><br>Legal advertisement costs, public engagement/response, and meeting expenditures were based off similar amendments processed in the past. |
| Northern Neck PDC | Planning districts have no zoning authority. |
| Prince George County | This proposed legislation would require additional expenditures approximately $25,000 for zoning amendments / ordinance updates. |
| Pulaski County | There is no anticipated direct expenditure to Pulaski County based upon the proposed language and change to the local application approval process. |
| Rappahannock County | |
| Town of Chincoteague | |

| Net Reduction in Revenues: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Locality** | **Juris** | **Real Estate Revenue Reduction** | | **Personal Property Revenue Reduction** | | **Sales Tax Revenue Reduction** | | |
| | | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | |
| Albemarle County | County | | | | | | | |
| Alleghany County | County | | | | | | | |
| Augusta County | County | | | | | | | |
| Bedford County | County | | | | | | | |
| Chesterfield County | County | | | | | | | |
| City of Alexandria | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Chesapeake | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Norfolk | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Poquoson | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Richmond | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Virginia Beach | City | | | | | | | |
| City of Winchester | City | | | | | | | |
| Roanoke County | County | | | | | | | |
| Dickenson County | County | | | | | | | |
| Fairfax County | County | | | | | | | |
| Fauquier County | County | | | | | | | |
| Hanover County | County | | | | | | | |
| Mecklenburg County | County | | | | | | | |
| Montgomery County | County | | | | | | | |
| Northern Neck PDC | Other | | | | | | | |
| Prince George County | County | | | | | | | |
| Pulaski County | County | | | | | | | |
| Rappahannock County | County | | | | | | | |
| Town of Chincoteague | Town | | | | | | | |

| Net Reduction in Revenues: Itemized Estimates by Responding Localities | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Locality** | **BPOL Tax Revenue Reduction** | | **Other Local Revenues Reduction** | | **State Revenue Reduction** | | **Total Decrease in Revenues (Biennium Total)** | **Response Totals** | |
| | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | FY27 | FY28 | | | |
| Albemarle County | | | | | | | 0 | Cities: | 7 |
| Alleghany County | | | | | | | 0 | Counties: | 15 |
| Augusta County | | | | | | | 0 | Towns: | 1 |
| Bedford County | | | | | | | 0 | Other: | 1 |
| Chesterfield County | | | | | | | 0 | Total: | 24 |
| City of Alexandria | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Chesapeake | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Norfolk | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Poquoson | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Richmond | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Virginia Beach | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| City of Winchester | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Roanoke County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Dickenson County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Fairfax County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Fauquier County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Hanover County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Mecklenburg County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Montgomery County | 0 | 0 | 5000 | 5000 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | | |
| Northern Neck PDC | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Prince George County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Pulaski County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Rappahannock County | | | | | | | 0 | | |
| Town of Chincoteague | | | | | | | 0 | | |

| Locality | Revenue Narrative by Responding Localities |
|---|---|
| Albemarle County | No impacts to revenues are anticipated. |
| Alleghany County | |
| Augusta County | The first responder and school provision would essentially negate any ability of a local government to regulate as it would be extremely difficult to demonstrate that a tower would not provide additional wireless coverage or capacity for first responders. |
| Bedford County | |
| Chesterfield County | The proposed legislation is not anticipated to have a revenue/expenditure impact. |
| City of Alexandria | The legislation's fiscal impact is currently unquantifiable. |
| City of Chesapeake | |
| City of Norfolk | |
| City of Poquoson | Same fee would apply to the application regardless of the new process. |
| City of Richmond | Should not create any revenue impact for the City of Richmond. |
| City of Virginia Beach | No budgetary implications expected. |
| City of Winchester | No fiscal impact to the City |
| Roanoke County | This bill will only change the administrative process. We do not get many cell tower applications, so the revenue would change minimally, if at all. |
| Dickenson County | |
| Fairfax County | |
| Fauquier County | no estimate |
| Hanover County | We don't expect a decrease in revenues as a result of this bill |
| Mecklenburg County | The County does receive tower application fees. The fee would remain even if we don't only have an administrative, rather than a legislative process to approve the tower. |
| Montgomery County | Administrative review will eliminate the need for a special use permit and thus reduce the revenues collected for such review.<br><br>(The figures in item 9 should be negatives but unable to enter them as such.) |
| Northern Neck PDC | Planning districts have no zoning authority. |
| Prince George County | This proposed legislation does not have an impact on revenues for Prince George County. |
| Pulaski County | There is no guarantee of direct revenue to the locality. Revenues will depend on the siting of the equipment and revenues generated from the value of leases, colocations, etc. This legislation will not specifically generate new revenue streams to the county or specific increases in fees, taxes, etc. |
| Rappahannock County | |

| Locality | Revenue Narrative by Responding Localities |
|---|---|
| Town of Chincoteague | |