

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6, relating to comprehensive*
3 *plan; environmental justice strategy.*

4 [H 256]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6 as follows:**8 **§ 15.2-2223.6. *Comprehensive plan shall consider adopting an environmental justice strategy.***9 **A. For purposes of this section:**

10 *"Environmental justice community" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-234, as determined by*
11 *the most currently available demographic information compiled for census tracts or census blocks within the*
12 *local planning commission's jurisdiction, provided that any discrete geographic area smaller than a census*
13 *tract or census block within the local planning commission's jurisdiction may be designated as an*
14 *environmental justice community in accordance with the definition set forth in § 2.2-234.*

15 *"Fenceline community" means the same as that term is defined in § 2.2-234.*

16 **B. Beginning July 1, 2026, each city with a population greater than 20,000 and each county with a**
17 **population greater than 100,000 shall, during the next scheduled and all subsequent reviews of its**
18 **comprehensive plan, as required in § 15.2-2230, consider adopting an environmental justice strategy that**
19 **meets the requirements of this section.**

20 **C. The environmental justice strategy shall:**

21 **1. Identify each environmental justice community and fenceline community within the local planning**
22 **commission's jurisdiction;**

23 **2. Identify major sources of pollution or hazardous waste sites within the locality's jurisdiction, on the**
24 **basis of data from any federal, state, or local environmental agency or health department;**

25 **3. Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in environmental**
26 **justice communities and fenceline communities by means that include the reduction of pollution exposure, the**
27 **improvement of air and water quality, emergency management, resilience to increased flooding, excessive**
28 **heat and other impacts of a changing climate, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and**
29 **sanitary homes, and physical activity;**

30 **4. Identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in public decision-making processes by**
31 **members of environmental justice communities and fenceline communities;**

32 **5. Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of**
33 **environmental justice communities and fenceline communities, such as low-cost broadband internet**
34 **programs and internet adoption initiatives encompassing digital literacy and device access, job training,**
35 **access to healthy foods, access to aging in place assistance, equitable access to public parks and greenways,**
36 **increased tree canopy, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, electric vehicle charging, and**
37 **other clean transportation options;**

38 **6. Identify objectives and policies that encourage linking public transit with community and health**
39 **services and siting or co-locating health services in unconventional settings to ensure convenient access for**
40 **all community members; and**

41 **7. Establish baseline environmental and health conditions using existing public health data or gathering**
42 **additional information as needed to characterize any disproportionate public health conditions in the**
43 **identified fenceline communities.**

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