

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 [S 425]

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.*