

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY - 2026 SESSION

CHAPTER 730

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 15 of Title 56 an article numbered 7.1, consisting of sections numbered 56-484.18:1 through 56-484.18:8, relating to regional emergency communications authorities.

[H 1067]

Approved April 13, 2026

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 15 of Title 56 an article numbered 7.1, consisting of sections numbered 56-484.18:1 through 56-484.18:8, as follows:

Article 7.1.

Regional Emergency Communications Authorities.

§ 56-484.18:1. Regional emergency communications authority.

The governing bodies of two or more counties, cities, or towns, or a combination thereof, may, by concurrent ordinances or resolutions or by agreement, create a regional emergency communications authority. Such authority shall be subject to all rights, privileges, and obligations provided in Article 7 (§ 56-484.12 et seq.).

§ 56-484.18:2. Definitions.

As used in this article, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Authority" means a regional emergency communications authority created pursuant to this article.

"Governing body" means, in the case of a county, the board of supervisors and, in the case of a city or town, the board, commission, council, or other body, in which the general legislative powers of the city or town are vested.

"Locality" means any county, city, or town in the Commonwealth.

"Participating locality" means any locality that has adopted an ordinance, agreement, or resolution to create or join an authority pursuant to this article.

"Public safety answering point" has the same meaning as provided in § 56-484.12.

§ 56-484.18:3. Ordinance, agreement, or resolution creating authority.

Each ordinance, agreement, or resolution creating an authority shall include the following:

- 1. The name of the authority and address of its principal office;*
- 2. The name of each participating locality, together with the names, addresses, and terms of office of the first members of the board of the authority;*
- 3. The purpose for which the authority is to be created, insofar as the governing bodies of the participating localities determine to be practicable; and*
- 4. The number of members who shall exercise the powers of the authority and the number from each participating locality pursuant to § 56-484.18:5.*

§ 56-484.18:4. Joinder of new locality; withdrawal from authority.

Any locality may become a member of any existing authority, and any locality that is a member of an existing authority may withdraw therefrom, but no locality shall be permitted to withdraw from any authority after any obligation has been incurred by the authority except by unanimous vote of all members of the authority.

The governing body of any locality wishing to withdraw from an existing authority shall signify its desire by resolution or ordinance. The governing body of any locality wishing to become a member of an existing authority and the governing bodies of the localities that are currently members of the authority shall, by concurrent resolutions or ordinances or by agreement, provide for the joinder of such localities and specify the number and term of office of members of the expanded authority to be appointed by each of the participating localities, together with the name, address, and term of office of initial appointments to membership.

§ 56-484.18:5. Board.

A. Each authority shall be governed by a board consisting of representatives appointed by the governing bodies of participating localities. The ordinances, agreements, or resolutions creating the authority shall specify (i) the number of members of the board, (ii) the manner of appointment and the terms of office, (iii) voting rights and quorum requirements, and (iv) procedures for filling vacancies. The board shall adopt bylaws governing its procedures and the conduct of its business.

B. The board shall (i) adopt an annual operating and capital budget, (ii) establish policies governing the operation of the authority, (iii) appoint and supervise an executive director, (iv) ensure compliance with state and federal laws, (v) provide for an annual audit of the authority's accounts, and (vi) report annually to the governing bodies of the participating localities.

§ 56-484.18:6. Powers of authority.

Each authority created pursuant to this article shall have the power to:

- 1. Establish and maintain emergency communications systems and public safety answering points;*
- 2. Employ, appoint, or contract administrative, technical, or operational personnel as necessary to carry out the purposes of the authority;*
- 3. Acquire, hold, lease, or dispose of real and personal property or any interest therein, as necessary or convenient to carry out the purposes of the authority;*
- 4. Enter into contracts and agreements necessary or convenient for the performance of its duties;*
- 5. Apply for, receive, and expend funds from the Commonwealth, the federal government, participating localities, or any other lawful source; and*
- 6. Adopt, amend, and repeal rules and regulations not inconsistent with this article or the laws of the Commonwealth in order to carry out the powers given in this article.*

§ 56-484.18:7. Limitations of authority.

An authority created pursuant to this article shall operate in accordance with Article 7 (§ 56-484.12 et seq.) and all rules, standards, and requirements established by the 9-1-1 Services Board. Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize an authority to provide medical care, medical direction, or clinical decision-making or categorize an authority as an emergency medical services agency under Article 2.1 (§ 32.1-111.1 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 32.1.

§ 56-484.18:8. Construction of article and applicability.

This article shall be liberally construed to effect its purposes and to promote regional cooperation in emergency communications. Nothing in this article shall require any locality to participate in an authority.