

350 Fairfax, AMMD Pine Grove Project, Appalachian Voices, Audubon Naturalist Society, Bridging The Gap In Virginia, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Clean Fairfax, Clean Virginia, Climate Action Alliance of the Valley, Concerned Citizens of Charles City County, First Alliance Consulting LLC , Food & Water Action, Friends of Buckingham, Lynnhaven River NOW, New Virginia Majority, Piedmont Environmental Council, Potomac Riverkeeper Network, Renewal of Life Land Trust, Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, Southern Environmental Law Center, Virginia Community Rights Network, Virginia Conservation Network, Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Virginia Organizing, Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Yogaville Environmental Solutions

August 24, 2020

Dear Members of the Virginia General Assembly,

The objective of the 2020 special session of the General Assembly is to provide immediate relief and long-term recovery solutions for Virginians struggling under the weight of combined economic and public health crises. Virginians - particularly Black and Brown communities - were already facing rising electricity bills before the COVID-19 crisis and economic fallout. Now they face mounting debt from unpaid electricity bills when disconnection moratoriums end.

Lawmakers can easily soften the blow for families and small businesses by passing House Bill 5088, bipartisan legislation introduced by Democratic Delegate Jay Jones and Republican Delegate Lee Ware.

What the Bill Does:

- **Immediate utility rate relief:** This legislation will inject nearly \$400 million into Virginia's economy.
 - Returns over \$250 million of emergency, accelerated refunds to all Dominion customers from their 2017-2019 overcharges, per Dominion's annual earnings filings.
 - Establishes an over \$100 million utility debt forgiveness fund to aid Virginians who have accrued debt to Dominion due to the COVID-19 crisis, administered by the State Corporation Commission (SCC) and funded using the 30% of overcharges that under current law Dominion keeps. This protects all Dominion customers—including those in good standing—from being forced by Dominion to shoulder the cost of the unpaid debt.

- **Long-term economic benefits:** This legislation will lower future utility bills for all Dominion customers by fixing unfair regulations, while still allowing Dominion to recover all its costs and its full authorized 9.2% profit from Virginians.

This legislation will only provide these critical benefits to Virginians if passed **during the 2020 legislative special session**. Because of Virginia's rate case schedule, the next legislative

session is too late to enact these reforms—delaying seriously jeopardizes the legislature's ability to return customers' money to them when they need it most.

We urge the General Assembly to hear House Bill 5088 and vote YES on this critical economic relief legislation.

Sincerely,

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