

Find Out About Public Meetings and Regulations

Virginia Regulatory Town Hall

www.townhall.virginia.gov

[Virginia Regulatory Town Hall](#) is a website managed by the Commonwealth that houses detailed information on all regulations and regulatory meetings of all state agencies. The website also has a free e-mail notification service.

What information is available on the Town Hall?

All the information you need to participate in the regulatory development process is available on the Town Hall, including agency contact information, text of proposed changes, agency background discussions, meeting information, the economic impact analysis of proposed regulations, historical tracking information, and agency guidance documents.

How can I find a regulation?

There are several ways to locate a regulation on the Town Hall. You can click on "[Find a Regulation](#)" (townhall.virginia.gov/L/ListBoards.cfm) on the menu column (shown to the right) to search for a regulation. Here you will be able to browse regulations by clicking on the tabs at the top of the page:

- **By board**
You may get information about any state board by selecting the ⓘ next to the board name. You may view a list of Virginia administrative Code chapters over which a board has authority by selecting the board name.
- **By agency**
You may see information about any state agency that promulgates regulations under the Administrative Process Act by selecting the ⓘ next to the agency name. This will return a list of boards assigned to that agency.
- **By secretary**
To get information about a particular secretariat and associated agencies, select the ⓘ next to the secretariat name. DEQ is within the Secretariat of Natural Resources.
- **By Virginia Administrative Code citation**
Selecting a title returns a list of citizen regulatory boards operating under that title. DEQ and its affiliated boards are all under Title 9. Enter the title in the first box, and then press the Tab key.

Click on "[Actions Underway](#)" (townhall.virginia.gov/L/NowInProgress.cfm) to view a list of all regulations currently in development. This page links directly to

the chapter, action, and stage information pages. Click "Filter options" to control which actions or stages you see. Most of the documentation on regulatory changes can be found by clicking the Chapter, the Action Title of Current or Past Actions, and then the relevant Stage ID.

There are also links to "Petitions", "Legislative Mandates", "Periodic Reviews" and "General Notices".

How do I find out about public hearings and meetings?

Select the "[Meetings](#)" link (townhall.virginia.gov/L/meetings.cfm?time=future) on the menu bar. You will be presented with all upcoming meetings and public hearings, as well as minutes from past meetings. You may select an agency or board from the drop-down list to view the meetings for a particular board.

How do I register for special Town Hall services?

Users can sign up to receive customized e-mail notifications to track regulatory actions and meetings. With this notification service, you no longer need to receive paper mailings from agencies or go to the library to search through issues of the Virginia Register. To register with the Town Hall, click on "[Sign up](#)" (townhall.virginia.gov/L/Registrar.cfm) on the menu bar. You will be prompted to provide your name and email address, and you will also be able to specify notification preferences.* All notices you are scheduled to receive on any one day will be combined in one e-mail message.

When you first sign up on the Town Hall, you will automatically be directed to select your notification options. There you will find a "tree"

Find a Regulation
Regulatory Activity
Actions Underway
Petitions
Legislative Mandates
Periodic Reviews
General Notices
Meetings
Guidance Documents
Comment Forums
Sign in
State Agency ⓘ
Registered Public ⓘ
Sign up ⓘ

that allows you to select any combination of secretariats, agencies, boards, and chapters for which you wish to receive notifications. You may expand or collapse tree branches by clicking the "+" and "-" signs (see the image below). By clicking on a box, you place a check mark in that box as well as all other boxes that fall under that branch of the tree. A box with a shaded check mark means that some, but not all, of the underlying boxes have been selected. Simply select all the areas for which you wish to receive notification. For example, if you select education, you will receive notification on any actions or regulatory meetings that occur in the education secretariat.

<input type="checkbox"/> Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce and Trade
<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent Agencies
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Conservation and Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Environmental Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Pollution Control Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Environmental Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> State Water Control Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Waste Management Board
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (visit the agency website www.dgif.virginia.gov for most recent regulatory updates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Historic Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Resources Commission
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety and Homeland Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation

Once you have made your selections, indicate whether you wish to receive notification regarding regulatory meetings, regulatory actions, or both.

Your preferences must be saved or they will not take effect. You may change your preferences as often as you wish by logging on to the site and selecting the "notification options" link under the "registration options" pull-down menu.

How do I comment on regulatory changes?

In addition to submitting comments directly to the agency contact person listed on the Town Hall, the

website contains public comment forums. These comment forums allow users to view comments made by others as well as submit comments of their own. Comment forums are open for comment **only** during the official comment period for a stage. After the comment period has closed, all of the comments that have been made may be viewed, but no new comments may be entered. Whenever a comment forum is available, there will be a link on the Stage Information page to the comment forum. Another way to access all open comment forums is to click "[Comment Forums](http://townhall.virginia.gov/L/forums.cfm)" link on the menu bar.

Once you have made and submitted a comment, it becomes part of the official record of a regulatory action and cannot be changed. Of course, you are always free to submit a second comment to clarify or expand on your previous remarks.

Are there any suggestions for making effective public comments?

Read the regulation and the agency background statement about the regulatory action carefully. If you do not understand the facts presented in the regulation, you may do your own research or ask the agency contact, listed on Town Hall, for clarification. In writing your comment, target specific issues and cite specific regulatory provisions. Include facts, data, experiences, and other evidence that support your position. Respond to other views based on their merit and avoid personal attacks. Provide specific ideas or suggestions for solving the problems you have identified. It may be helpful to identify your own background or expertise in the subject area. Keep your comment concise and to the point. Discuss one issue at a time.

Can I search the Town Hall for information?

Yes. The Town Hall has "Search the Town Hall" available in the upper right portion of every page.

For more information, contact:

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**If you do not have an email address, you may create one for free on many websites such as www.gmail.com or www.yahoo.com.*