



DegreeDays

News from the Virginia Propane Gas Association

'We Voted No.' How an Electric School Bus Bill Became One of the Biggest Battles of the Session

For Dominion Energy's electric bus bill, the third time was not the charm.

Late Saturday night, the Virginia House of Delegates voted once again to reject a controversial proposal that would have smoothed regulatory approvals for Dominion, the state's largest electric utility, to get into the electric school bus business.

The vote was the latest defeat of legislation that the House had already rejected twice in various forms, including once before that same evening. Similar versions last year were also struck down by the chamber repeatedly.

"Last year we saw a version of this bill, and we as a body voted no. This year, we saw a version of this bill, and we as a body voted no. We then amended the bill and sent it on to the Senate with a version that would have controlled costs in a very serious way. Those amendments were rejected," Del. Dan Helmer, D-Fairfax, told delegates before the final vote. "We voted again on this bill and we voted no. ... It is time for us to move on."

A New Direction for Utility Growth

In a session in which Virginia Democrats devoted significant energy to pushing through laws incentivizing electric vehicle use, the electric school bus bill became a flashpoint because of its connection to Dominion.

Long one of the most influential forces in Virginia politics, Dominion remains one of the biggest corporate donors to political campaigns on both sides of the aisle, including Sen. Louise Lucas, D-Portsmouth, who carried electric school bus legislation in both 2020 and 2021 and, according to the Virginia Public Access Project, has accepted \$136,500 in donations from the utility since



2017. During legislative sessions, the utility employs a fleet of lobbyists to advocate for its interests; since May, VPAP records show the company has registered 31 lobbyists.

Dominion has also shown an increasing interest in electric school buses. In August 2019, the utility announced a pilot program that would deploy 50 school buses throughout its territory to replace districts' diesel buses and would use the batteries as storage resources to help stabilize a grid increasingly integrating renewables.

On investor calls, then-CEO, President and Chair Tom Farrell touted the program, calling it a "nation-leading initiative." In February 2020, with Lucas and Del. Kaye Kory, D-Fairfax, carrying electric bus bills in the legislature, he told investors and analysts that if the laws passed, the company would expand the program to 1,500 buses at an estimated cost of \$400 million.

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President's Message



Hello Members! Even though it means letting go of potentially being the only VAPGA President in history to never attend an in-person meeting, I am delighted we are planning to hold our first VAPGA meeting next month at Kingsmill Resort.

Your safety and health remain top priority and we will continue to follow all recommended protocol to mitigate as much risk as possible. I am really looking forward to seeing many of you soon!

Virginia received an Hours of Service (HOS) waiver last month and I have a confession to make—VAPGA had nothing to do with getting this waiver. In fact, we never asked for it. I say this because I received thanks from many of you and Mother Nature deserves 100% of the credit. I share this because I would like to highlight what this event taught me.

When I started receiving requests from members to obtain the waiver, I was reminded there is specific protocol to follow and one that VAPGA helped to create. This protocol entails supplying high-level staffers at the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy with information about problems with Virginia product supply, long wait times at Virginia terminals, and customer runouts. Our polling efforts revealed that supply issues in VA never rose to the necessary levels in legitimating requesting this waiver and it became clear that the problems we faced were a result of supply and logistics decisions most likely made as we met with our suppliers and carriers many months ago. Sure, other states received the waivers but as highlighted above, that is not a legitimate argument in our state. I am certainly no expert in these subjects and make no recommendations to you but this is a good reminder for me, and hopefully you, to consider conditions in different scenarios and remember them even when our winter coats are packed away. Getting this waiver should never be part of our plan.

Lastly, I'd like to remind you that VAPGA is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. This is a big milestone and I encourage you all to take a moment to reflect on the impact that the association has had on your professional career, and our industry as a whole. While we will be celebrating all year, our formal 75th Anniversary celebration will take place at our Summer Meeting in Virginia Beach on July 11–14. Keep an eye out for registration and hotel info in the coming months. If you would like to help in planning for the celebration, please contact 75th Anniversary Committee Chair, Meghan Kulinski, at meghan@valleyenergy.org.

Nicole Sullivan

REGISTER TODAY! SPRING MEETING April 25–27, 2021 Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg, VA



Registration is now open for VAPGA's 2021 Spring Meeting at Kingsmill Resort on April 25-27. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Ensuring the wellbeing of our attendees is of paramount importance and a shared responsibility. VAPGA and its host, Kingsmill Resort, will be implementing a variety of protocols and practices, consistent with federal, state, and local COVID guidelines and requirements to ensure we have a safe, enjoyable, and rewarding experience. Additional information on safety protocols can be found on the Spring Meeting web page on the website.

Kingsmill is offering a **\$199+ taxes** group rate for the event. The cut-off date for room reservations is **Monday April 12**. [Make your room reservation online](#) or call **1-800-832-5665**. If you call, be sure to state that you are with VAPGA. Rates cannot be changed later if you fail to do so.



Executive Director's Message



As we turn the proverbial page from winter to spring, the VAPGA staff, leadership, and volunteers have been hard at work carrying out the daily duties of the association. Whether it has been fighting through another contentious General Assembly session (see: VAPGA lobbyist Mike O'Connor's 2021 session recap on pages 8-9), advocating on behalf of propane before the State Corporation Commission, recruiting new members, or planning our first in-person meeting in about 18 months...2021 has gotten off to a busy start!

Speaking of our first in-person meeting in 18 months, we are only a few weeks away from the 2021 Spring Meeting at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg (April 25-27th)! If you have not done so already, I encourage you to register and attend. Along with our host property, we will be implementing a variety of COVID-19 protocols and practices to ensure all attendees and guests have a safe, enjoyable, and rewarding experience. I look forward to (finally!) having an opportunity to meet and interact with the membership face to face.

As always, I encourage members to reflect on the association and provide me their feedback with thoughts or ideas of how we can strengthen VAPGA. Additionally, if you have not been actively participating or attending association events over the past few years, we hope to see you engaged again this year. Our association is only as strong as our members' participation. So attend a meeting, join a committee, donate to the PAC—make it a point to get and stay engaged with VAPGA this year!

I am proud to serve as your Executive Director, and while I'm excited about the things we've accomplished thus far in 2021... we're just getting started.

Zach Eisenman

2021 Rebates Are Now Available!



We are again offering
\$300 SAFE APPLIANCE REBATES
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(5 remaining)

Please contact **Tami Guthrie** at tami@eametings.com or **804.241.2232** for additional information or to request an application and pre-approval numbers.

VAPGA Website is LIVE!

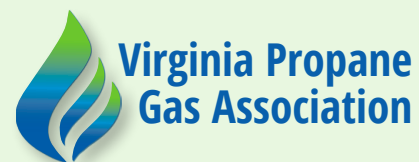


Our new website, vapga.org, and database system are now live! If you have trouble accessing the website or logging in, please contact Executive Director, Zach Eisenman, at zach@eametings.com.

Look for more information soon on how to navigate the member side of the website, including setting up your MemberClick's member profile, confirming representatives from your organization, engaging with committees, and more.

2021 Dues

Please remember to pay your 2021 association dues if you have not done so already. Dues notices were sent out electronically last month. Contact Zach Eisenman at zach@eametings.com if you did not receive that communication.



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Market Development Committee Update

Join Us to Help Foster a Stronger Association!

The goal of the Market Development Committee is to advance the industry through programs and publicity that enhance public awareness of propane, provide member opportunities to increase utilization and sales, and disseminate information to energy decision-makers. Challenge can foster change, and heading into FY 2021 the Market Development Committee decided to take a look at its current programs to ensure that the association was best utilizing our PERC funds.

One program in particular we looked at was the propane vehicle rebate. Since we began offering vehicle rebates in 2013, it has been a consistent struggle getting members to utilize them. With the emerging electrification movement, we have had much discussion as a committee as to why members are not taking advantage of the vehicle rebates and how we could better utilize that funding. To increase participation and better allocate funds, the committee decided to amend the propane vehicle rebate to 5 rebates of \$5,000 each, rather than the 19 rebates of \$2,500 that had previously been applied for each year—and largely went unused. We will evaluate the results at the end of the year

to determine if we will keep the vehicle rebates, or use the PERC funding for other initiatives—such as marketing materials to combat the electrification movement.

The committee also decided to cut back on the overall number of safe appliance rebates this year. For FY 2021 the committee applied for 200 safe appliance rebates at \$300 each. This is 90 rebates less than we had last year (290 total), which is approximately \$27,000 in funding we can utilize elsewhere. We will evaluate the safe appliance program at the end of the year, and make further changes as may be warranted. The committee has also discussed using some of these funds for consumer and legislative marketing material to promote propane and advocate for our industry. Should you have any ideas or suggestions, or want to be involved with the committee, feel free to reach out!

Please contact me with any ideas for new initiatives or opportunities that the committee should look into to promote market development.

Hayley Karicofe

Chair, Market Development Committee

Hayley.Karicofe@americas.com or (804) 316-8128



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Please welcome **Jamison Walker** as the new Chair of the Young Gassers Committee. Jamison is a Branch Manager for Blossman Gas based in Fredericksburg, Virginia. A 2011 graduate of James Madison University, Jamison has been with Blossman since 2018. You can reach Jamison via email at jrwalker@blossmangas.com.

Young Gassers Scholarship Application Deadline

Applications for the 2021 Young Gassers VAPGA Scholarship are now available. The deadline for submission of the application and all supporting materials is May 31, 2021. The rules and guidelines for the scholarship can be found [here](#) and the application can be found [here](#).

Call for Scholarship Fund Donations

Due to the lack of in-person meetings last year, the Young Gassers Committee missed out on an entire year of fundraising. While the new leadership is working on ideas to raise funds for the YG scholarship (including a raffle at the upcoming Spring Meeting), they are also currently accepting donations. If you or your organization would like to donate to the Young Gassers Scholarship Fund, please reach out to **Tami Guthrie** at tami@eametings.com and she will send you an invoice.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Virginia Department of Health has issued a statement that essential employees, including the energy industry, would be eligible to receive a vaccine when the state moves to Phase 1c. An up-to-date listing of localities and their current vaccination phase can be found [here](#).

The Virginia Department of Health has also launched a new statewide vaccine pre-registration system to make it easier for people to sign up for a free COVID-19 vaccination.

Each essential worker in Virginia should pre-register [here](#) or call 877-VAX-IN-VA. To protect employee health information and promote equity among employees of many types of businesses and organizations, employees are no longer being pre-registered through employers. Employers are still encouraged to raise awareness among employees of the importance of getting vaccinated and how to pre-register, and to work with local health districts when it would make sense to hold on-site clinics for employees who are already pre-registered and eligible.

For additional information, including frequently asked questions and details about vaccine eligibility, click [here](#).

Upcoming Events

SPRING MEETING

April 25–27, 2021

Kingsmill Resort
Williamsburg, VA



SUMMER MEETING

July 11–14, 2021

Marriott Resort Virginia Beach
Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, VA



FALL MEETING

October 10–12, 2021

The Virginian Hotel
Lynchburg, VA





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Legislative Update

“Electrify Everything” Lobbyists and State Bureaucrats Mostly Come Up Short—But They Will Be Back

At the beginning of the session, advocates from the “Electrify Everything” lobby were pushing to bring California vehicle emission standards to Virginia along with state rebates to Virginians purchasing electric vehicles. While they did push the California cars legislation across the finish line, other language in that bill (H.R. 1965) that would have allowed the Air Board to ignore the General Assembly and consider the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) without General Assembly review (and public input) was dropped. Even the legislation’s supporters stated that lack of state funding would likely make the timing of the grant programs unrealistic. Because of this, many who had supported the bill now believe that that lack of prospective purchasers render California emissions standard unreasonable. A re-do of the entire issue, as well as TCI, is likely next year.

What was left unaddressed the entire session was the issue of the transportation spending and how Virginia will fund its roads and bridges when electric vehicles pay only a \$98 annual fee in lieu of taxes, whereas cars and trucks using gasoline and diesel pay about twice that amount. The Virginia “Electrify Everything” lobby needs to inform the public that for every electric vehicle they put on the road there will be less revenue for highway construction and maintenance. This will be one of our important messages in the future.

Dominion Electric School Bus Subsidies Killed Again

SB 1380, that would have allowed Dominion to purchase cut-rate electric school buses while profiting from the venture by transferring energy back on to the grid when the vehicles are not carrying passengers, has been defeated for the second year in a row. It was certainly not for lack of trying as during the process proponents offered at least three differing versions, all while pushing the benefits of electric buses, but not the financial benefit for Dominion. Despite this and literally a dozen environmental and justice organizations pressing support, these efforts came up short when the Dominion school bus bill was defeated by the House 41-49 on its final vote at 11:00 p.m. on the last night of the session.



Dyed Diesel Tax

As originally drafted, HB 2118 would have imposed the first ever tax on dyed diesel for the purpose of capitalizing another fund where the state would provide rebates to purchasers of electric cars. We opposed this strongly along with trade groups from construction and agriculture that rely heavily on dyed diesel. The dyed diesel tax was ultimately dropped from the bill. Proponents expected to receive an appropriation from the state budget to proceed, but none materialized. The effect is that we will now have an electric vehicle fund on the books, but without money to fund rebates. Unfortunately, the ultimate report contained the following language:

“Fund and Program project” means all or any part of projects pursued for the Fund and Program, that are necessary and desirable for (i) reducing air pollution in order to protect the health of Virginians; (ii) increasing the number and use of electric school buses in Virginia; (iii) replacing commercial vehicles or heavy equipment in Virginia that uses fossil fuels with electric vehicles or equivalents that reduce air emissions; (iv) ensuring a broad geographic distribution of grant awards; and (v) creating employment opportunities for Virginians.

We will have to continue to monitor this issue, particularly how sections (ii) and (iii) impact member companies and customers.

Electric Utilities Fail in Attempt to Convert Propane, Oil Heat and Natural Gas to Heat Pumps

As we have reported, the electric utilities ran a Trojan horse bill through the House during the first half of the session and almost accomplished their long sought goal of ending fossil fuel heating of Virginia homes. The original version would have required ratepayer subsidized conversions from heating oil, propane, and natural gas to electricity. Because it was introduced on the last day of the session, the bill moved under the cover of darkness through the full House. After determining the true intent of the bill, the petroleum and propane industries along with the natural

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> **Legislative Update**, continued from page 8

gas companies began contacting senators describing how this bill was nothing more than a windfall for regulated utilities at the expense of Virginia small businesses. We owe a great deal of thanks to Senator Monty Mason of Williamsburg who recognized the problems and removed the language with regard to ratepayer subsidization. Because the two branches could not agree, a conference committee drafted new language that, while imperfect, removed the ratepayer subsidization provision. [Here](#) is a copy of the revised bill that is on its way to the governor.

What's next?

In November, all 100 members of the House of Delegates will stand for election and a new governor will be elected. Republicans must pick up six seats in the House, and defend at least one seat on the outskirts of Northern Virginia which is in a swing district. Their path to retaking power will be steep. Senators will not stand for reelection until 2023.

Virginia will be one of only two states electing a governor this year, and that has attracted a record number of candidates to date. It remains to be seen if former Governor Terry McAuliffe will be able to use his largely successful first term for a return to the governor's mansion or whether the calls for diversity will lead to change in the top of the ticket. Likewise, a crowded field of Republican primary candidates will make this fall's governor election one of the most highly contested in recent memory.

Mike O'Connor

Comprehensive Map of U.S. Propane Infrastructure Available

The Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) has contracted with RBN Energy to produce a comprehensive map of the United States' propane infrastructure. The electronic map includes all major propane pipelines, trading hubs, fractionation centers, storage locations, import/export dock facilities, key rail terminal facilities, and other relevant infrastructure. Along with sourcing data from RBN's Geospatial Information Services ("GIS") database and other publicly available geospatial data, RBN Energy consulted with members of the propane industry to accurately detail propane infrastructure within the United States. The map is available at the link above. If you would like to get the map reproduced in a wall-sized rendering or would like to have specific state iterations, please contact Bridget Kidd at PERC at bridget.kidd@propane.com.



Click [HERE](#) for a detailed map of the U.S. Propane Infrastructure

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Safety Depends on Communication

When providing Basic Principles and Practices classes, I always include the video "Half Hour to Tragedy" which recounts the tragic explosion in Ghent, West Virginia on January 30, 2007. Most everyone in our industry is familiar with this horrific event where five people were killed and four others seriously injured. The video provides details of the subsequent Chemical Safety Board (CSB) investigation as well as suggestions to address issues discovered during the investigation.

Several deficiencies were discovered during the investigation, the first being the improper location of the tank. A 500-gallon tank was installed against the building, clearly in violation of NFPA 58 regulations. While this should not have happened, I can understand that sometimes we make mistakes. I know I have. What is more difficult to understand is that the tank was filled over one hundred times and no one reported the improper placement of the tank to a manager. This lack

of communication undoubtedly contributed to the final outcome which emphasizes that all deficiencies must be reported in a timely manner.

During a conversation with Jeff Wanko, lead investigator for CSB, I became aware of another contributing factor that wasn't so obvious. I asked him what everyone who has ever seen the video wanted to know: Why didn't anyone inside the building evacuate? Once he explained his thoughts on the failure to evacuate, I realized how easily this could happen.

Not discussed in the video is that after detecting the odor of gas, one of the building occupants went outside and looked to the rear of the building where the propane technician was working.

She stated she saw a "fog" on the ground and called to the technician asking if he was ok. After the technician responded that he was fine, she went back inside the building. Another failure to communicate vital information.

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> **Communication**, continued from page 10

A short time later a Fire Department Captain arrived and after a brief conversation *walked* to the rear of the building to further investigate the incident. Although firefighters are trained not to run on the fire ground for numerous reasons, his walking gave a false impression of a lack of concern for safety. When interviewed by the CSB, the building occupants stated that neither the propane technician nor the Fire Captain seemed excited, so they figured they had nothing to worry about. Clear communication among those involved could likely have produced a different outcome.

This event exemplifies the importance of clear and continuous communication regarding safety. Regulations, policy, proper procedures and expectations must be emphasized and clearly communicated to all employees. Additionally, we must take advantage of every opportunity to share safety related information with customers and emphasize its importance.

Dennis Cruise

propanetrainingservices@gmail.com

(434) 841-1636

VAPGA CETP Training

We will be sending a survey out on behalf of the Education & Safety Committee to assist in planning training sessions for this year. **We would appreciate you responding to the survey.** Last year, in order to avoid commingling employees, we were able to provide in-person training programs on an individual company basis.

While we anticipate that this will again be an option, the committee would appreciate input from the membership as to what your training needs may be for the coming year and/or if you would be willing to host a safety class this year.

Please take a moment to advise the committee of all specific training or safety programs that will deliver the most value to you this year.

Members can make their needs or suggestions known by contacting **Dennis Cruise** at **(434) 841-1636** or propanetrainingservices@gmail.com

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Portrait of Rich Cordisco

> **School Bus Bill**, continued from page 1

“Ultimately, we would replace all 13,000 diesel school buses in our Virginia service territory,” he said.

Since then, Dominion has doubled down on renewables. In a July surprise, the utility announced it had canceled the long-delayed \$8 billion Atlantic Coast Pipeline and was selling almost all its gas transmission and storage business to Berkshire Hathaway. Spurred on by the 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act, Dominion embraced what it called a repositioning to a “pure-play” regulated utility model that would capitalize on the flood of clean energy investments that were already underway. In February, Farrell told investors that Dominion had identified “over \$70 billion of green investment opportunity between 2020 and 2035,” nearly all of which could potentially be recouped from customers plus profit for investors.

“This is, as far as we can tell, the largest regulated decarbonization investment opportunity in the industry, and the accelerating electrification of the transportation sector promises to drive growing demand for utility-scale zero- and low-carbon generation for many years to come,” he said.

During hearings on Lucas’ electric school bus bill this session, the company emphasized for lawmakers the role the buses could play in meeting the state’s renewables targets.

“As part of the VCEA last year, 2,700 megawatts of energy storage was required to be either installed or procured by Dominion by 2035,” lobbyist Christine Noonan told one committee while justifying the costs of the proposed program, which the utility calculated would cost the average customer about \$12 extra per year. “So an increase in cost to that effect in carrying out the requirements of the VCEA was inevitable, and I think this is an excellent step in that direction that not only benefits the ratepayer but also benefits our schoolchildren and our environment.”

A Lot of Money on the Line

Many lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans alike, however, proved skeptical of the idea of utility ratepayers paying for school buses, particularly as the bill continued to resurface after being voted down.

“This one kept coming back because there was a lot of money on the line—and a lot of money on the line for a company with an outsize influence in Virginia,” said Del. Sally Hudson, D-Charlottesville.

“I am aware of at least three different versions of this bill that have appeared this very day, all of them I suspect, a couple of them that I know, have been written by Dominion,” he said. “So they clearly have a great deal of interest in seeing this version put on the record for some reason.”

On the House floor, Del. Lee Ware, R-Powhatan, who has been one of the longest-running advocates for utility customer protections and rate reform, cautioned lawmakers to think “long and hard” before passing the measure.

“I am aware of at least three different versions of this bill that have appeared this very day, all of them I suspect, a couple of them that I know, have been written by Dominion,” he said. “So they clearly have a great deal of interest in seeing this version put on the record for some reason.”

Dominion did not answer specific questions from the Mercury, including one about whether its officials had drafted versions of the bill.

“We will continue to work to move this innovative program forward for the benefit of the grid, the environment and the health of school children,” said spokesperson Rayhan Daudani in a statement.

Throughout the session, supporters of the bill tried various strategies to get it across the finish line. The size of the program was reduced from 1,250 to 1,000 buses. A provision declaring the bus program “in the public interest” that would have strongly tipped the scales in favor of regulatory approval was removed and replaced with language granting regulators the authority to determine whether proposals were “reasonable and prudent and in the public interest.” Another would have required that 25 percent of all buses deployed go to Title I schools, which are those with high numbers of low-income students. And another, in an amendment added by the House and later stripped out, would have capped costs.

Lucas, in one legislative maneuver intended to keep her proposal afloat, replaced another bill creating an electric vehicle grant fund with her own bill — a move that multiple sources familiar with negotiations said helped it stay alive.

Lucas’ office did not respond to a request for a comment.

In the House, lawmakers remained split. Democratic leadership, including Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn, Majority Leader Charniele Herring and House Democratic Caucus

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> **School Bus Bill**, continued from page 13

Chair Rip Sullivan all repeatedly voted in favor of the bill. Sullivan presented the final versions of the bill in the House, praising the authority it granted regulators to review whether projects were in the public interest, which he called “a very significant shift.”

Asked why the speaker allowed the bill to be revived numerous times, once in violation of procedural rules, Filler-Corn’s communications director, Kunal Atit, said that “the House on occasion votes on bills multiple times during a session.”

Helmer too noted that the bill is “not the only legislation that’s ever gotten a second chance.” But, he said, “I am frustrated that Dominion’s legislation seems to get chances that other legislation does not.”

Ultimately, the debate would stretch until just before 11 p.m., when the bill became the last one the House would take up in the 2021 session. Sources with knowledge of the deliberations said some House members had been wary of letting the bill die completely while there was still time for the Senate to retaliate by killing House bills that remained alive, but with the Senate’s adjournment just past 10:30, the back-and-forth ended.

In the days after the vote, legislators and lobbyists offered a variety of explanations for the bill’s failure.

Many lawmakers balked at the prospect of allowing Dominion to expand into the transportation sphere, particularly for a program with a large price tag: not including the costs of charging infrastructure, an estimated \$345 million, with \$108 million of that being profit, according to projections provided by the State Corporation Commission to Hudson in a February 22 letter.

“There is no natural reason for a utility to be engaged in transportation, and there are models that exist as close as Maryland on how you do electric school buses in a cost-effective way,” said Helmer, referring to a recent announcement by Montgomery County, Md. schools to lease 326 electric school buses in a “budget-neutral” deal.

Some Democrats also indicated the failure of a slate of bills that aimed to reform electric utility rate reviews likely played a role in the bus bill’s defeat. Those efforts, which were quashed by the Dominion-friendly Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, reflect an increasing backlash to Dominion that has been underway since 2018 as a new wave of lawmakers more skeptical of

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corporate interests has been elected and regulators have issued reports that the utility is overcharging customers.

“Dominion has a well-established history of manipulating the General Assembly to secure utility-friendly legislation, but those days are over,” said Brennan Gilmore, Executive Director of Clean Virginia, a political action committee and advocacy group founded by Charlottesville millionaire Michael Bills in 2018 to counter Dominion’s influence in Richmond. “A new generation of lawmakers have joined veteran consumer protection champions to restore necessary balance to the creation of energy policy in the Commonwealth.”

Hudson called the General Assembly’s ultimate rejection of the bus proposal “an important vote” for legislators grappling with the role utilities should play in policymaking.

“We are in the middle of a massive energy transition, and this vote was largely about defining the boundaries of a

utility. ... There’s a lot of money to be made in all these new ventures, and it’s easy, I think, for some to lose track of those boundaries,” she said.

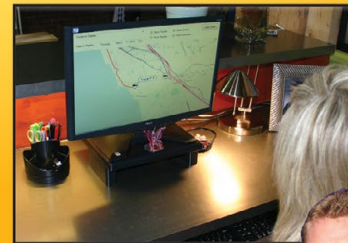
About the Author

Sarah Vogelsong covers environment and energy for the Mercury. Originally from McLean, she has spent over a decade in journalism and academic publishing. Most recently she covered environmental issues in Central Virginia for Chesapeake Bay Journal, and she has also written for the Progress-Index, the Caroline Progress, and multiple regional publications. In 2017, she was honored as one of Gatehouse’s Feature Writers of the Year, and she has been the recipient of numerous awards from the Virginia Press Association. She is a graduate of the College of William & Mary. Contact her at svogelsong@virginiamercury.com

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