



NEWS RELEASE

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Virginia's "Greening the Budget 2005" Report Shows How To Save Millions While Protecting the Environment

(Richmond, VA) In response to Virginia's current fiscal uncertainty, 10 conservation groups have released "Greening the Budget 2005: 6 Ways to Save Taxpayer Dollars and Protect the Environment In the Commonwealth of Virginia," a new Green Scissors report detailing how the state could realize at least \$286 million in savings this year while still protecting critical environmental protection programs.

The "Greening the Budget 2005" report offers 6 recommendations that would have fiscal implications for Virginians ranging from \$286 to \$3,586 million in FY 2005. Ten statewide conservation organizations – Ag Prospects, American Lung Association of Virginia, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Friends of the Earth, Piedmont Environmental Council, Sierra Club – Virginia Chapter, Southern Environmental Law Center, Virginia Conservation Network and Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund – co-sponsored and released the report. This effort to help frame public policy debates and push budget cuts that help both the environment and taxpayers was pioneered by the national Green Scissors Campaign, led by Friends of the Earth, Taxpayers for Common Sense and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

The report's recommendations range from eliminating tax breaks for sprawl-inducing economic development to eliminating hidden pollution subsidies by raising fees for activities such as dumping in landfills and discharging wastewater. A summary of these recommendations can be seen in the table on the following page. Specifically, the report recommends:

Implement Smarter Development Incentives: Link economic incentive programs to sustainable land use principles to avoid incurring additional sprawl-related costs.

Eliminate Wasteful Transportation Projects: Implement Virginia's Fix It First policy, fund non-highway transportation alternatives, and reform the Public Private Transportation Act.

Make Sure Virginia Gets Its Share of Federal Funds: Maximize use of the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to which Virginia is entitled.

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Dedicate Pollution Fund Receipts: Dedicate funds generated by the sale of air pollution credits to air quality monitoring and improvement programs.

Pay To Throw Away: End taxpayer subsidies of the solid waste industry and out-of-state disposers.

Ensure That Users Pay For Permit Programs: End taxpayer subsidies of waste and water permit programs.

Table 1: Summary of Fiscal Impact of Green Budget Policies

GREEN BUDGET POLICY	Fiscal Implications / Revenues (FY 05)
Implement Smarter Development Incentives	\$30 million biennially
Eliminate Wasteful Transportation Projects	\$100-\$3,400 million
Make Sure Virginia Gets Its Share of Federal Funds	\$80 million
Dedicate Pollution Fund Receipts	\$11.6 million
Pay To Throw Away	\$56 million
Ensure That Users Pay For Permit Programs	\$8.4 million annually
TOTAL:	At least \$286 – \$3,586 million

A copy of the Virginia “Greening the Budget 2005” report can be found at www.greencissors.org or <http://www.valcvef.org>. Copies can also be attained by calling (804) 225-1902.

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