



**Abigail
Spanberger**
GOVERNOR

ENERGY: **Making your bills** **more affordable**

Abigail knows that Virginians are feeling the sting of high energy bills, and that affordable energy is essential to drive economic growth. To meet the moment and meet increased demand, she believes that Virginia needs a clear, statewide vision for the Commonwealth's energy future.

Abigail believes that the path towards long-term, sustainable energy independence will not only benefit Virginia's environment, but will lead to job security for thousands of Virginians and lower rates for Virginia consumers. To get there, we need to improve statewide energy planning, and ensure our regulatory system is aligned to meet our goals and prioritize Virginia ratepayers. At a time when the federal government is raising Virginians' energy costs and threatening local jobs by cutting LIHEAP funding and increasing the cost of local and near-term energy production, we must take action to keep energy affordable in Virginia.

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Make Virginia more energy independent by increasing local generation. Focus on expanding electricity generation sources with low or no fuel cost, to lower prices and minimize price volatility. Support local energy production such as our nation-leading offshore wind development and incentivizing the businesses that make component parts to locate their operations here in Virginia. Expand and incentivize the development and deployment of solar energy projects in commonsense locations such as abandoned mine sites, former industrial sites, rooftops, and parking lots, and locations where the reduction in energy costs would have an impact on the local community, such as schools and public buildings. Encourage the continued development of advanced energy technologies, such as small modular nuclear reactors, fusion, geothermal, and hydrogen, including by facilitating agreements between utilities and high-energy use customers to pilot their development and encouraging collaboration with Virginia's higher education institutions to pursue further research and development.

Make sure data centers don't drive up energy costs for everyone else in Virginia. To meet rapidly increasing demand and reduce cost hikes on Virginia families, make sure data centers are paying their fair share of the cost of new electricity generation and transmission that must be built to power them. Encourage clean on-site and off-site generation and storage at data centers.

Reduce consumers' bills and wasted electricity by maximizing the use of energy efficiency measures, such as home weatherization. To both reduce consumers' costs and expand job opportunities for Virginians, maximize all available low-cost energy efficiency opportunities – including home weatherization, on-bill financing for efficiency projects, and small business energy efficiency programs. Monitor the energy efficiency goals for Dominion and Appalachian Power, and work with utilities and other stakeholders to put programs in place so they can achieve and grow their goals. Negotiate the best ratepayer deal to rejoin RGGI, and use funding from the revenue for energy efficiency projects, in line with Virginia statute.

Prevent skyrocketing energy bills for Virginia families by making better use of existing resources. Focus on the deployment of both short- and long-duration energy storage so we can store energy at low-cost and low-use times and use it at high-cost and high-use times. Support the implementation of the recently passed pilot program to allow businesses and households to opt in to have their thermostats, appliances, and solar arrays support the grid on demand — reducing the need to build more expensive power plants and more transmission lines to cover peak demand hours. Direct the Virginia Department of Energy to work with the State Corporation Commission and other stakeholders to evaluate the benefits, impacts, and implementation recommendations for demand response programs and other demand-side management programs in the Commonwealth. Use existing resources more efficiently by using grid-enhancing technologies and exploring opportunities for surplus interconnection such as solar plus storage.

Address regulatory issues to speed up new energy projects, drive down costs, and increase certainty. Work collaboratively with other Governors to address issues that apply to the regional transmission organization, such as interconnection approval timelines, interconnection fees, regional generation capacity, and the price of wholesale power. Lower costs for consumers by speeding up timelines to bring new projects online and making fees for new projects more transparent. Ensure regulatory agencies in Virginia such as DEQ and VDOT are adequately staffed to deliver timely responses to permit applications. Provide local governments with better tools to assess new energy projects.

Ensure that eligible Virginians are making use of the resources currently available to them to lower their energy bills. Work with utilities to expand uptake of Virginia's Percentage of Income Payment program, which provides bill assistance for low-income customers in Dominion and APCO territory, by increasing awareness and outreach to eligible customers. Encourage additional Virginians to make use of cost-reducing options such as community solar, and cost-smoothing options such as budget billing.