

**Virginia Department of Health
Office of Health Equity
P3 Partner Resource Webinar
July 16, 2026**



**virginia interfaith
power & light**

www.vaip.org

**Faith B. Harris,
Executive Director**

A Few Faith Declarations on Environment

“...This is not our world, it is God’s. Therefore, any damage we do to this world is an offense against God himself.” Baptist

“We believe humans remain a partner in Creation. We fulfill the mandate by practicing Tikkun Olam, literally, repairing the world...” Jewish

“Safeguard creation. Because if we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us. Never forget this.” Pope Francis

“We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness. We need to wake up and realize that the Earth is our mother as well as our home.” Buddhist

2026 Theme: Healthy, People Healing Planet

We believe all life is interconnected and there is a direct connection between our health and the health of the environment where we live, work, and play. What we breathe, what are bodies are exposed to in the environment directly impacts our health. When people are healthy it is because they are able to drink unpolluted water, eat food grown in nutrient rich soil, and breathe fresh air. If we care for our environment we are caring for the life that environment sustains.

Our Mission and Vision



Mission: Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL) collaborates among people of faith and conscience to grow healthy communities by advancing climate and environmental justice.

Vision: Overcoming the climate crisis, eradicating environmental and social injustices, and living in a just, thriving, and equitable world

Our Focus

Fenceline and frontline
Communities of color and
low-income people who are often
the most impacted by climate
disruption. Where they live are often
sites of fossil fuel infrastructure,
fracking, cancer hotspots and
industries that create
asthma-inducing pollution.



More About Us

Virginia Interfaith Power & Light (VAIPL) is one of the only organizations working with faith communities statewide to mobilize a morality-centered response to the climate crisis and environmental injustices.

We work with faith traditions of every background and people of conscience to build power to hold leaders political and religious to win equitable outcomes for communities. Our work is directed toward finishing the civil rights agenda of the 1960's

Our Power

- Faith communities hold moral and political power. We have found that every tradition in some way prioritizes caring for people and planet. We encourage people of faith and good will to leverage their power to hold decision-makers accountable and save our common home.
- The environmental movement has focused heavily on the science of climate and environmental impacts. We believe the moral and ethical arguments are equally important.



Why Environmental Justice?

<https://youtu.be/vL3Ug2S4jt0?si=7y3FqomzL9SSMZfs>

Environmental Protection Agency & Virginia Code

“the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”

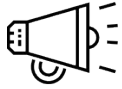
VA Code Definition § 2.2-234.

“the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of every person, regardless of race, color, national origin, income, **faith**, or **disability**, regarding the development, implementation, or enforcement of any environmental law, regulation, or policy”



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A Few of VA IPL 2026 Objectives



Challenge the rapid growth of data centers driving new gas plants construction and polluting industries threatening to destroy air and water quality and access, and drive up utility costs. Promote just and equitable transition to renewable energy sources like wind and solar.



Advocate for policies like our cumulative impact in air and water polluting permitting, EJ in comprehensive planning, and weatherization task force bills.



Strengthen support for climate and environmental justice through educational events, town halls, distribution of resources, and engagement with faith communities and leaders across Virginia.

How VA IPL Defines Environmental Justice

VA IPL Organizational Lens/Definitions

Environmental Justice upholds the moral imperative to preserve Earth, particularly the interconnectedness between people and nature. Environmental justice affirms that all communities value self-determination and deserve to enjoy fresh air, pure water, and unpolluted soil, the resources to thrive and to live life with dignity and peace, not diminished or degraded by religious, cultural, social, and economic injustices that have historically and disproportionately impacted Black, Brown, Indigenous, and low-wealth communities within Virginia and beyond.

Current Campaigns & Coalition Work

Ethylene Oxide - Lawsuit Southern Environmental Law Center EtO Waiver & Cumulative Impacts

Heat Island Effect - Urban Forestry (recruiting Climate Connectors within faith communities, tree planting, tree giveaways across Richmond) City of Richmond, Groundwork RVA, Southside ReLeaf,

Resilience Projects - Coastal and flood plagued communities Mathews County

Legislative - Cumulative Impacts in Permitting and Managed Retreat Legacy Property

Annual Environmental Justice Retreat for legislators

Annual Lobby Days: Day for All People, & Student Day of Action with our sister organization Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Annual Climate in the Pulpits, on the Bimah, and in the Minbar campaign

Recent Legislation



	Healthy Communities	• Requires cities/counties to consider environmental and health impacts in comprehensive planning
	Cumulative Impact	• Requires state agencies to consider emissions, pollution of surrounding industries in permitting
	Managed Retreat - Legacy Properties	• Provides support and protection for the legacy of homeownership in rural flood-prone areas

Healthy Communities Bills



- Increase focus on community health in regular comprehensive planning process
- Encourages robust community engagement
- Increase equal protection for vulnerable communities from environmental and health hazards

Cumulative Impact Bill



- In Person Townhalls
- 7/22/26 J. Sargeant Reynolds CC
- 7/29/26 DEQ Tidewater Office
- Cumulative Impact and Environmental Justice Statements
- All documents on website
- Public Hearing(s) local, weeknights or weekends
- Decisions after 45 days
- Mitigation plan



Legacy Properties

- Study needs of legacy of homeownership in seniors, rural and flood-prone areas
- Prioritize vulnerable communities in Managed Retreat planning





Earth Rise ~ Amanda Gorman



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Contact Us

The best and quickest way to get in contact with us is via email.

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Join us!

- Follow us on social media & join our newsletter
- Work with us: volunteer, internships, and career opportunities



bit.ly/VAIPLLT