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General Assembly Convenes

Today was a historic day in Virginia's capitol. For the first time in 400 years of the General Assembly a woman, Eileen Filler-Corn of Springfield, was elected Speaker of the House. After a long year of campaigning, Democrats were able to flip the House for the first time in two decades, as well as take the majority in the state Senate, cementing their firm grasp on party control in Richmond.

We have begun developing a listing of bills that would impact the industry. That listing can be [accessed here](#). Please know that bills can be introduced up until January 17, so this will be a work in progress with additions and subtractions for the next week or so.

Following is some further detail on a few of the problematic bills we have encountered so far this session.

Mobile Fueling

Delegate David Reid is again carrying legislation ([House 779](#)) that would authorize mobile fueling for gasoline in Virginia. Several of these firms have recently received tens of millions of dollars in venture capital which they are using to hire lobbyists to expand their business interests. They have been contacting marketers across Virginia with the pitch of new business - the truth is that you will have to do all the work while the mobile fuelers get 85% of the profits. Fueling outside of retail locations and cardlocks is highly regulated for reason of public safety, but the mobile fuels community and their sympathizers are trying for the second time in three years to use the legislative process to skirt the same safety and consumer protections existing locations have to meet. Over the coming week, the VPCMA board will be considering next steps to take on this important bill. We may be calling on you to assist us.

Electric Chargers at State Agencies

During the last session Delegate Bulova filed legislation that would have authorized any state agency to install electric chargers and provide recharging service for free to electric vehicles. Shortly after this bill passed the House, we went to him and explained that any electric infrastructure for charging vehicles at private sector locations must be self-funded and that his bill provided an economic advantage to the state government and electric charging companies that is unavailable to the private sector. Further, electric vehicles pay only a \$64 annual registration fee, which is about half of what a passenger car fueled by gasoline or alternative fuels pays. Working in concert with the delegate an amended version of the bill was drafted limiting the application to three state agencies and requiring that the electricity be offered at prevailing rates with applicable taxes paid. That bill was signed by the governor and went into effect July 1, 2019. That is why we were so disappointed to see Delegate Bulova has filed his original bill [House 511](#), allowing all state agencies to give away electric charging and stripping our protections for the private sector. We will be meeting with him early next week to express our opposition to this reversal.

GPS Mandate

Delegate Terry Austin represents a rural district that encompasses much of I-64 between Lexington and the West Virginia line and a large section of Route 11. He has filed [House bill 170](#) mandating that all commercial trucks over a certain weight be equipped with a GPS transponder. His contention is that in times of interstate crashes, mobile apps like Waze divert truck traffic to local roads and residential streets and that mandating GPS with VDOT information would keep this from occurring. We have already met with him and expressed that this would subject all who own trucks to expensive monthly subscription fees for these services, and suggest that funds from last year's 7.6 cents per gallon fuels tax increase along I-81 could be used to address the issue. He understands our concerns and will continue to work on solutions that are not costly to association members.

Fuels Tax Increase

As we have previously reported, the governor has included in his budget a framework for increasing the fuels tax by 4 cents per gallon each year for the next three years and then indexing that to inflation. Last week we met with Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine and her top advisers. At that time we learned that they are considering moving away from basing the tax as a percentage of wholesale price and reverting to a cents per gallon measure. We reminded the secretary that under the Transportation Climate Initiative, sales of gasoline and diesel would be rationed over the next twenty years on a sliding scale

resulting in a total decline of 80% in either 2034 or 2044. This TCI initiative which has been previously endorsed by the Northam Administration would eliminate the gas tax increase within four years and place road funding underwater for the next generation. What happens next is anyone's guess and is likely to go down to the final days of session.