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January 9, 2018

Dear Legislator:

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) and our approximately 1,000 member companies and organizations, we would like to wish you a productive and successful 2018 legislative session. Please find NVTC's 2018 Legislative Agenda attached to this letter.

As the largest technology council in the nation, NVTC represents organizations and business leaders who are focused on the broad business climate of Virginia. Our members are some of the largest employers in the Commonwealth and include many of the most successful technology companies in the world, as well as hundreds of promising small and growing entrepreneurial enterprises.

NVTC has worked for over 25 years in partnership with Virginia policymakers to advance a strong, innovative technology policy framework. We strongly advocate for policies and investments that drive competitiveness and economic strength, grow our technology workforce, and provide the infrastructure necessary to power Virginia's technology and innovation ecosystem.

We maintain a full-time presence in Richmond during the General Assembly session. If there is anything we can do to help you this session or any feedback we can provide, please feel free to contact NVTC Vice President of Policy Josh Levi, NVTC Public Policy Manager Troy Murphy, or Myles Louria of Hunton & Williams. Their contact information is attached to our Legislative Agenda.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of NVTC's 2018 Legislative Agenda. We look forward to working with you this session and hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

**Bobbie Kilberg**  
President & CEO  
Northern Virginia Technology Council





# 2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) believes that central to Virginia's future economic growth and vibrant technology ecosystem is an environment that aggressively promotes technology, entrepreneurship and innovation within a framework of forward-looking policies and investments that includes strong public private partnerships and regulatory restraint.

In this effort, we urge Virginia policymakers to support the following objectives and priorities relating to **competitiveness and economic growth, STEM education and workforce, and infrastructure** during the 2018 legislative session and over the next calendar year.

## **Competitiveness and Economic Growth:**

### **Build a strong technology ecosystem through policies and investments that:**

- **Enhance Virginia's ability to attract companies** seeking to expand, relocate, move corporate headquarters or establish research operations.
- **Support a comprehensive "Grow Your Own" strategy** to make Virginia a top destination for technology startups and scale-ups, entrepreneurs, early-stage investors, researchers and innovators.
- **Ensure Virginia maintains its status as a strong state for business** by minimizing taxes and regulation, preserving right to work, and avoiding negative signals that drive private enterprise away from the Commonwealth.

Enacting a new biennial budget will be an area of focus during the 2018 legislative session. Ongoing economic uncertainty and below-trend revenue growth underscore **the importance of continuing to invest in programs and initiatives that will drive technology research, innovation, commercialization and high wage jobs in key areas** where Virginia has existing strength and the most opportunity to compete globally. Specific areas in the short and long term include **data analytics, cybersecurity, personalized medicine and health technologies, unmanned systems, and data storage and warehousing**. These sectors provide synergies that can substantially differentiate Virginia's expertise and capabilities and drive our economic growth and competitiveness.

In preparing and approving a new two year budget, we urge Virginia policymakers to:

- **Develop and execute an innovation strategy for the state** that includes alignment, coordination and oversight over Virginia's programs and investments related to research, commercialization, intellectual property transfer, entrepreneurship and startup formation, and capital investment.

This strategy should:

- **Strengthen and support the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT)** which is critical to the growth and vibrancy of Virginia's technology ecosystem and our global competitiveness as a destination for entrepreneurs, startups and investment.
- Support targeted **initiatives, incentives and tax policies that drive research, innovation and technology startups** and ensure the statewide technology ecosystem is promoted and well resourced. These include the CIT GAP Funds, Commonwealth Research and Commercialization Fund, Virginia Research Investment Fund, Angel Investment Tax Credit, capital gains tax exemption, income tax subtraction for Virginia venture capital accounts, Virginia's R&D Tax Credits and the Virginia Biosciences Health Research Corporation.
- Support **MACH37, the Smart City Actuator** and the launch of additional sector-specific accelerators.
- Establish a streamlined process for businesses to engage with Virginia universities on **research and intellectual property commercialization** and technology transfer partnerships.
- **Follow the models established by other leading states in creating the Role of Chief Data Officer (CDO)** to promote greater enterprise wide standardization, utility and accessibility of anonymized data assets across state government to better address high priority policy issues, provide tangible operational improvements and cost savings, and increase capacity for data-driven decision making across the Commonwealth.
- Continue state investment in the **Global Genomics and Bioinformatics Research Institute at the Inova Center for Personalized Health** to leverage Virginia's life sciences and health assets, the data analytics and cyber capabilities of our technology sector, and the strengths of our universities.

- **Provide additional funding for the GO Virginia initiative, a business-led effort** focused on providing incentives to localities and public and private entities to foster more regional collaboration among business, education and government to promote private sector growth, job creation and workforce development; **and provide VEDP with funding to market Virginia to businesses globally.**
- **Continue to enhance Virginia's statewide competitiveness in attracting data center investment and jobs** by maintaining Virginia's data center sales tax exemption.
- **Ensure that Virginia maintains a legal and regulatory environment that is conducive to maintaining existing business and attracting/supporting the formation of new businesses.** Policymakers should:
  - Extend or permanently **codify Virginia's moratorium on local Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) regulation** to prevent a patchwork of local restrictions and regulations over commercial and private UAS operations and ensure that any new statewide regulation is narrowly targeted and does not impair deployment of UAS for legitimate commercial purposes.
  - Prevent new barriers and remove existing barriers to entry for adoption of disruptive technology and gig economy business models.

#### **STEM Education and Workforce:**

- **Boost Virginia's technology workforce through a robust science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education pipeline, by increasing the number of STEM certifications and degrees awarded statewide, expanding state support for apprenticeships, internships and other hands-on learning opportunities,** and advancing policies that ensure Virginia businesses and universities can hire the best and brightest and that all Virginians can participate in the growing technology economy.
- Continue support and funding for the **"New Economy Workforce Credentials Grant Fund,"** which aligns workforce training programs with the needs of business and industry by targeting credentials in high demand fields (including cybersecurity and other technology areas).

- Support the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP's) proposal to create a **customized, turnkey workforce recruitment and training incentive program** to help secure high-quality economic development projects with an emphasis on existing firms.
- Develop a collaborative public-private initiative to inform students who are graduating from Virginia's colleges and universities, those receiving important industry certifications, and veterans in the process of separating from the military about the diversity of technology employment opportunities and the underlying ecosystems offered across the Commonwealth and the compelling reasons they should choose to live and work in Virginia. This initiative, which could be funded through each GO Virginia region, can **increase local, regional and national awareness around the broad range of technology businesses that are seeking to fill high wage technology positions**, promote the meaningful opportunities Virginia technology businesses offer to those interested in contributing to their diverse missions, and highlight the various sectors and markets where Virginia businesses drive innovation in providing technology goods and services.
- Support the Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Program and other **targeted workforce initiatives to provide training and job opportunities for veterans** returning to Virginia after active duty.
- Enact state legislation to extend basic job protections by **prohibiting employers from discriminating based on sexual orientation**. In addition to fostering fair treatment in the workplace, such legislation would benefit technology employers by promoting employment and retention of a critical talent pool as well as higher education institutions in their recruitment and retention of faculty and researchers who train the workforce and help drive our innovation economy.
- **Grow Virginia's STEM workforce** by increasing STEM focus in K-12, providing incentives and additional compensation to help attract and retain quality STEM teachers, and implementing additional STEM programs for Virginia students.

### Infrastructure:

**Improve broadband, transportation, energy and other infrastructure** to support economic development and help Virginia businesses compete.

- Provide funding to **scale the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative**, a public-private initiative that leverages public funding to increase private sector **broadband deployment in unserved areas**.



- Enact policies that **promote technology innovation and advancement through the build-out of wireless broadband technology.** It is essential to implement a wireless broadband statutory framework that facilitates the deployment of wireless facilities, including 5G, cellular networks and Wi-Fi access points. The framework should provide for more uniformity and streamlining in the permitting process and fee structure across the Commonwealth for this critical infrastructure. This critical infrastructure is necessary to meet growing demand for wireless data, attract businesses that require ultra-fast and reliable network connections and recognize the full potential of Internet of Things (IoT)-related solutions in healthcare, transportation, Smart Cities and other important areas.
- Continue efforts to support offshore wind generation and the deployment of utility scale solar projects across Virginia to **provide technology businesses with greater access to renewable energy.**
- **Support and enact the priorities of the Northern Virginia Transportation Coalition, which for the 2018 General Assembly Session include:**
  - **Establishing a sustainable funding source for Metro.** Such funding should be tied to implementation of appropriate operational, personnel and governance reforms, including establishment of a Temporary Control Board to stabilize Metro as issues of governance, operations, funding and safety are resolved as recommended in the LaHood Report.
  - Providing a sustainable revenue source to **address Virginia's transit funding gap** that will begin to occur in 2019 as transit bonds expire. Funds should not come from/dilute existing highway or transit resources.
  - Creating a floor on the regional gas tax that would be comparable to the floor established as part of the statewide gas tax enacted through HB 2313 in 2013.
  - **Increasing the Smart Scale weight awarded to project congestion reduction in Northern Virginia** from the current 45 percent to 60 percent.
  - Amending the law requiring the long-term benefits of Northern Virginia's regional funds be distributed proportionally among jurisdictions to **enable the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority to better address the region's most critical transportation needs.**

