

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday February 23, 2010

CONTACT: Julia Kim
804-698-7534

**Sen. Chap Petersen's Bills Unanimously Approved by House of Delegates
~Clean energy financing, the SAVE Act and Consumer Protection Act bills uncontested in
the House~**

Richmond, Virginia – February 23, 2010 – The Virginia House of Delegates unanimously passed three of Sen. Chap Petersen's bills, Senate Bills 110, 112 and 116, on Tuesday.

SB 110 authorizes localities to place liens against properties for clean energy projects, such as installation of solar or geothermal technologies, which are financed by a municipal lending program. SB 110 further permits the localities to sell these "clean energy" loans to outside investors.

According to industry experts, like Alan Givens, CEO of Parrish Services, SB 110 has the potential to create thousands of jobs in Virginia by attracting outside investors who are looking to invest in the growing clean energy technology field, especially where there are participating local governments. Such programs have been very successful in other localities like Berkeley, CA.

SB 112, the SAVE Act, allows natural gas utilities to petition the State Corporation Commission to implement a separate rider that would permit some cost recovery associated with approved gas delivery system improvements such as those made to aging and inefficient pipelines. Infrastructure eligible for improvements must be significantly outdated, potentially reduce greenhouse gas and not produce additional revenue for the gas utility with replacement.

SB 112 has the support of both the natural gas industry and conservation groups who concur that the SAVE Act will create jobs as well as reducing maintenance costs and enhancing reliability. This bill is a continuation of the "de-coupling" of the natural gas industry and was specifically endorsed by the Energy and Environment Commission on which Petersen sits.

SB 110 and 112 are two pieces of Petersen's larger energy conservation plan.

SB 116 substantially expands the scope of Virginia's Consumer Protection Act to give the Attorney General the ability to prosecute individuals and organizations that defraud houses of worship.

According to Petersen, it was apparent that this legislation was necessary after over twenty churches in the Washington metropolitan area and 200 nationwide were victimized by a kiosk marketing scheme last year.

The Washington Post's April 2009 coverage revealed that United Leasing of Associates of America of Brookfield, Wis., among others, allegedly leased defective electronic billboard kiosks to churches and then companies such as Television Broadcasting Online of D.C., one of the firms named in the District's suit, sold non-existent marketing services in tandem with the faulty equipment.

Congregations became contractually responsible for the repayment of debts incurred through equipment leasing covenants and illicit collection practices without possibility of legal recourse. Some churches were scammed out of tens of thousands of dollars. This bill permits the Virginia Attorney General -- like his counterparts in Maryland and the District of Columbia -- to prosecute these unethical practices.

"It's unusual to have three major pieces of legislation pass the Assembly in one session, but it's especially noteworthy when they all pass on the same day," said Petersen.

The three bills will be presented to Governor McDonnell for approval in the coming weeks.

Senator Chap Petersen represents Virginia's 34th State Senate district, which includes Fairfax City and much of Fairfax County.

###