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**Senate Preserves Virginia's Air Quality
~Sen. Chap Petersen successfully amends HB 1300 in the Senate~**

Richmond, Virginia – March 3, 2010 – House Bill 1300, allowing the trading of emissions credits in air quality non-attainment areas, was narrowly amended (21-19) by the Virginia Senate on the motion of Senator Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax), who filed a floor amendment to protect northern Virginia localities currently protected under state law from further decreases in air quality due to emissions trading. The amended bill then passed the full body on a vote of 27 to 11.

HB 1300, patroned by Delegate Terry Kilgore (R-Scott) eliminates the ability of the state Air Pollution Control Board to limit participation the trading of credits in nitrogen oxide, NOx, and sulfur dioxide, SO2, emissions. Under the Environmental Protection Agency's cap and trade system, power plants are allotted federally established allowances of NOx and SO2 annually and can then "trade" emissions credits so as to emit pollutants beyond these levels.

Petersen's amendment states that Air Pollution Control Board may still prevent power plants located within Virginia's nonattainment area, which is the City of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William, from trading pollution credits with in-state or out-of-state facilities. This amendment directly affects the Mirant power plant in Alexandria.

The City of Alexandria strongly supported maintaining the current exemption due to its proximity to the Mirant Plan. Fairfax County and Arlington also supported the current policy.

“Protecting air quality is the number one public health issue in northern Virginia. I'm glad we were able to maintain minimum air quality standards after adopting the amendment,” said Petersen.

Governor McDonnell must give HB 1300 final approval before it becomes law.

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

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