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January 16, 2012

Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr.
General Assembly Building, Room 328
Capitol Square
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Senator Ruff:

The Virginia Recycling Association (VRA) is the Commonwealth's leading organization committed to promoting recycling as a fundamental part of conserving resources and reducing solid waste. Our membership is diverse—citizens, local government litter and recycling coordinators, and business and industry professionals.

During a meeting of the VRA Board of Directors on Friday January 13, the Board resolved to oppose #37 of SJR 66 to eliminate the Litter Control and Recycling Fund Advisory Board (LCRFAB) in the 2012 Virginia General Assembly. Response is uniformly supportive from our membership and other organizations including the following that co-signed this letter:

- Keep Virginia Beautiful
- Virginia Council on Litter Prevention & Recycling
- Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful.

The LCRFAB has competently overseen the disbursement of litter and recycling funds to Virginia localities since 1995. The work of this board is critically important to hundreds of recipients who leverage these funds into added value through the work of volunteers, sponsors, local government employees, and environmental cleanups.

The Virginia Recycling Association staunchly opposes eliminating the Litter and Recycling Fund Advisory Board for the following reasons:

- The Board has met routinely and had all positions filled continuously for 16 years.
- All staff costs associated with administration of the Board are paid for from the taxes it collects; otherwise, there are no costs involved in the operation of the Board.
- The Board is charged with a mission and work products which it accomplishes fully.
- The work of the volunteer Board includes compliance of grant funds and advocacy for litter and recycling both of which will create more work for an agency that is already overburdened.
- The litter taxes and the Board were created as an alternative to a container deposit system, or "bottle bill." It was a compromise to satisfy both the bottlers and retailers, who opposed deposits. The Board is largely comprised of representatives of the industries that pay the taxes. Elimination of the board would disturb the compromise.
- Making the grant funds a line item in an agency budget will subject those funds to the same pressures, influences and frailties that affect all agency budgets. This will severely threaten the single source of state-level support for litter prevention and recycling.

The present system in which the Board operates makes great success with the very small amount of money it receives. The relationship of the taxpayers, the LCRFAB, the VLCLPR, and a small amount of state agency staff time, has resulted in a system that multiplies less than \$2 million annually into more than \$18 million worth of value.

The VRA and its supporters urge you to oppose #37 in SJR 66 eliminating the Litter and Recycling Fund Advisory Board. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions about this or any other matter related to recycling and litter prevention.

Most Sincerely,

Debbie Devine, President, Virginia Recycling Association

Tim Lee, Policy Chair, Virginia Recycling Association

Mike Baum, Executive Director, Keep Virginia Beautiful

Jennifer Budlong Cole, Executive Director, Virginia Council for Litter Prevention and Recycling

Carol Doss, Executive Director, Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful

cc: Senate Committee on General Laws and Technology