

ADVOCACY TIPS FOR URBAN & SUBURBAN VASOS MONITORS

Advocacy can seem daunting in urban and suburban environments because there are often many different sources of pollution. It can be difficult to know what to advocate for! As a VASOS monitor, you have the data, knowledge, and passion to advocate for clean water in your community. Here are some ideas and resources to help you get started, some of which you can do without even leaving your house!

VIRGINIA DEQ OPPORTUNITIES

- In the United States it is illegal to discharge point source pollution into “Waters of the United States” without a permit under the Clean Water Act. In most states, including Virginia, the EPA delegates authority to issue these permits to the state. [The public can review and comment on each new permit.](#)
- When water bodies are identified as impaired, cleanup plans called Total Maximum Daily Loads are developed and [public input is requested](#)
- Between January 1 and April 30 each year, you can [nominate a water body](#) to be monitored by DEQ’s Water Monitoring and Assessment Program
- Join a [watershed roundtable](#) and work together with others to achieve water quality improvement goals
- Review and comment on the draft [Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report](#) every other year. VASOS data has a direct impact on this report!

GET TO KNOW YOUR DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

- Check your county’s website to find out when Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings and public hearings are and how you can attend.
- You can also schedule your own meeting with your District Supervisor - share your data with them to show that you are a constituent who is dedicated to local water quality!
- Submit comments on relevant board items.

Get on Virginia DEQ’s [Public Notice Email List](#) to be notified whenever there’s an opportunity to comment!

[Sign up](#) to be notified of Virginia Regulatory Town Hall meetings happening near you!

OBSERVE YOUR WATERSHED

Using visual observation as you're out and about, or by searching on a navigation app or your county's GIS site, determine the major land uses in your watershed.



RESIDENTIAL

- Reach out to local HOAs (and work with your own!) about watershed-friendly practices the community can encourage and adopt



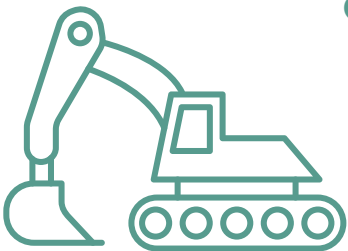
SCHOOLS

- Show up to local school board meetings to encourage them to adopt watershed-friendly practices on school grounds
- Check your county's website to learn the best ways to reach the school board



ROADS, PARKING LOTS, AND SIDEWALKS

- Road salt is a major pollutant from impervious surfaces that affects macroinvertebrates
- See [resources from the League's Salt Watch](#) that you can share with your Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, and local business owners



CONSTRUCTION

- From a safe distance, keep an eye on construction projects in your watershed
- Construction plans are available to the public, so if you notice any deviations from the plan's mandated environmental protections, you can report them to your county's Development office



LITTER

- Advocate to your Department of Environmental Protection or Public Works to install more trash cans and/or litter traps or collectors in affected streams
- See if your county or any local organizations run stream clean ups - or host your own!

- **See examples of [watershed-friendly practices](#) for homeowners from the League's Nitrate Watch**

- **Tips and Tricks from Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and Nature Forward's [Greening Your Neighborhood](#) program**

[Share your watershed observations with us!](#)



[Let us know how your advocacy goes!](#)