

23rd Annual Virginia Environmental Health & Safety (VEHS) Conference & Expo

September 10, 2025

The Westin Hotel | 6631 W Broad St, Richmond, VA 23230

The [Virginia Environmental Health & Safety \(VEHS\) Conference & Expo](#) is dedicated to industrial environmental, health, and safety excellence. The premier annual event brings together Virginia industry, regulators, legislators, and allies to share information, best practices, and technology, while exploring the affordability and sustainability of regulations on the Virginia economy.

Share the [event flyer](#) with your team!

9 AM | Opening Comments

Speaker: Jim Taylor, EHS&S Committee Chairman, Virginia Manufacturers Association; Smurfit Westrock

9 - 9:45 AM | Leveraging AI to Transform EHS: Harnessing Agentic AI for Smarter, Safer Environmental & Regulatory Practices

This discussion will include agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and techniques being used to transform environmental, health, and safety programs and regulations in industry and government.

Topics

- Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI) Empowered Statewide Regulatory Review
- AI Tools to Enhance Compliance

Moderator: [Farshid Kiani](#), Manager of Consulting Services, Trinity Consultants

Speakers

- [Reeve T. Bull](#), Office of Regulatory Management Director, Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin
- [Jason Schmitz](#), Director of Digital Solutions, Trinity Consultants

9:45 - 11:45 AM | Regulatory Briefing: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)

This annual briefing by the DEQ is a favorite among conference attendees as a “one-stop shop” for updates on pending and proposed regulations related to air, water, waste, recycling, climate change, land use, and permit practices.

Opening Comments: [Mike Rolband](#), Director, DEQ

Moderators

- [Liz Williamson](#), Partner, Balch & Bingham LLP
- [Brooks Smith](#), Managing Partner, Troutman Pepper Locke LLP

Speakers

- [Mike Rolband](#), Director, DEQ
- [Alex Samms](#), Chief Deputy, DEQ
- [Jonathan Rak](#), Chief Policy Advisor, DEQ
- [Bryant Thomas](#), Water Division Interim Director, DEQ
- [Kathryn Perszyk](#), Land Protection & Revitalization Division Director, DEQ
- [Brandon Bull](#), Director of Policy, DEQ
- [Kristen Sadtler](#), Enforcement Interim Director, DEQ
- [Matt Wells](#), Director, DCR

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM | Lunch

12:45 - 2 PM | Regulatory Workshop & Panel Discussion: Best Management Practices, Case Studies & Technology with Virginia Occupational Safety & Health (VOSH)

Explore current safety and regulatory priorities with VOSH experts, including OSHA's National Emphasis Programs (NEP), heat illness prevention, and robot and co-bot safety. This session features case studies, best practices, and emerging technologies to help manufacturers stay compliant and proactive.

Topics

- OSHA NEP
- Heat Illness Regulations
- Robot & Co-Bot Safety Regulation
- OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) 2025 Updates

Moderator: [Courtney Malveaux](#), Partner, McGuireWoods

Speakers

- [Chuck Stiff, CSP](#), Deputy Commissioner, VA Department of Labor & Industry
- [Jeffrey Cabral](#), Managing Director, VOSH Compliance
- [Ronald Graham](#), Director, VOSH Health Compliance
- [Jennifer Rose, CSP](#), Director, VOSH Cooperative Program
- [Zahra Qarni](#), Director of Boiler & Pressure Vessel Safety/Research & Analysis, VA Department of Labor & Industry
- Wendy Inge, Managing Director, VA Division of Labor & Employment Law
- [Mike Weber](#), Environmental Health & Safety Director, STIHL

2 - 2:45 PM | THC Impairment: Evolving Standards & Testing Challenges in the Workplace

As THC legalization expands, employers face increasing uncertainty around impairment standards and reliable testing methods. This panel will examine the current landscape of THC impairment protocols, legal considerations, and practical challenges for maintaining a safe and compliant workplace. Experts will discuss emerging technologies, policy development, and what employers should know as regulations and science continue to evolve.

Moderator: [Courtney Malveaux](#), Partner, McGuireWoods

Speakers

- [John Thomas](#), Partner, McGuireWoods
- [Jamie Patten](#), Acting Head & Chief Administrative Officer, Virginia Cannabis Control Authority

2:45 - 3:30 PM | PFAS Impacts on Wastewater Treatment Costs: Laboratory Capacity, Remediation Technology, & Consumer Costs

Panelists will discuss the costs of proposed regulations to treat wastewater for PFAS removal, the technology needed for removal, and the challenges with laboratory testing capacity.

Moderator: [Tina Bickerstaff](#), Senior Environmental Manager, GHD

Speakers

- Lee Pope, Water Technologies Director, ITAC
- [Greg Prelewicz](#), Planning & Water Resources Director, Fairfax Water Authority
- [Gary Yakub](#), Associate Principal Chemist/Audit Program Manager, Environmental Standards
- [Adam G. Sowatzka](#), Partner, McGuireWoods
- [Dr. Zhiyong Xia](#), National PFAS Technical Lead, GHD

3:30 - 4:15 PM | Combatting Product Bans & Wasted Material: Implementing Market-Based Recycling Solutions

Panelists will discuss how the development of a market and material-focused Recycling Development Center and Recycling Infrastructure Investment Fund could reduce solid waste going to landfills and increase recycling of valuable materials and fuels. This includes integrating proven voluntary programs such as Mattress Stewardship programs.

Moderator: [Stacie Gordon](#), Government Relations Director, Virginia Manufacturers Association

Panelists

- [Richard Diamonstein](#), Managing Director, Paramount Sleep Co.
- [Bryan Vickers](#), Consultant, Glass Packaging Institute
- [Tom Owston](#), Division President, Wilmington Paper

4:15 - 5 PM | Climate Change Update: Legislation, Litigation, Mitigation, Regulation, & Taxation in Virginia

Learn about the current status of climate change mitigation funding in the Commonwealth, get an update on the Virginia Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, review the pending RGGI litigation, and understand how Virginia's changing politics may impact EHS programs and manufacturing costs in 2026-2029 through electricity taxes, carbon emission regulations, and electric car mandates.

Moderator: [Stacie Gordon](#), Government Relations Director, Virginia Manufacturers Association

Panelists

- [Liz Williamson](#), Partner, Balch & Bingham LLP
- [Henry "Speaker" Pollard](#), Partner, Williams Mullen
- [Robert Gray](#), Climate, Circular, & Water Strategist, DuPont

5 PM | Closing Comments

Speaker: [Brett Vassey](#), President & CEO, Virginia Manufacturers Association

5 - 6:30 PM | Sustainability Reception & Networking

Visit exhibitors and network with peers at a reception that offers the best in environmental technology and services.