

On Mon, Oct 16, 2023 at 1:52 PM KATHLYN HOEKSTRA
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Members of the Electronic Meetings Subcommittee of the VA FOIA Council:

Please make a positive recommendation to the full Council about legislation such as HB 2050, which was introduced in the 2023 session of the VA General Assembly.

As the Chair of the Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission I know personally the impact this change would make to those who would like to serve our Commission, but whose family responsibilities take precedent. Allowing more than just 25% of our meetings to be held remotely would greatly benefit our members and thus prevent meetings from being cancelled when we cannot secure a quorum with in-person members.

Electronic meetings and remote participation in meetings have been a success. They increase attendance, transparency, and public participation in government. They also help address the economic hardship associated with in-person participation, especially where it is necessary to obtain childcare or travel long distances to appear in person.

HB 2050 proposed commonsense adjustments to the rules that now govern the meetings of local and regional bodies. In the interest of removing the unnecessarily restrictive requirements that now apply, I urge you let the full Council know that you support the kinds of changes that HB 2050 proposed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the need to expand electronic meeting access for regional and local public bodies.

Sincerely,

Kathie Hoekstra
Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission Chair