

# Local Climate Action Planning in Virginia

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# My Background

- BA in Political Science from Randolph-Macon College
  - Researched the effects of the Tea Party on Congressional elections and co-authored *Slingshot: The Defeat of Eric Cantor*
  - Focus on rural identity politics
- Served in the Constituent Services and Communication Offices in the McAuliffe Administration
- Communications Director for the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association
  - Represented 800 county conservation department employees and county board supervisors.
  - Worked directly with farmers and landowners to administer federal, state, and local conservation programs, with a focused on climate change adaptation, soil health and nutrient management, and technical expertise.



# Local Climate Action Planning Initiative (LCAPI)

- Initiative under the Schar School's Center for Energy Science and Policy (CESP)
  - Led by Co-Directors Paul Bubbosh and Dr. Joel Hicks
- University service that develops and implements climate action plans for Virginia's counties and cities
  - Emphasis on low-income, underserved, and disadvantaged communities
- Three core components:
  1. The Energy and Climate Policy Emphasis Area
  2. City of Manassas CAP Pilot
  3. Development of an extension service to assist localities with climate and energy planning, emission reductions, and resilience through environmental justice.



# LCAPs in Virginia, 2023

## Completed

Locality	Year Completed	Title
Albemarle County	2020	Albemarle Climate Action Plan
Arlington County	2019	Community Energy Plan
Fairfax County	2021	Energy and Climate Action Plan
City of Charlottesville	2022	Climate Action Plan
City of Harrisonburg	2020	Environmental Action Plan
City of Norfolk	2019	Climate Action Plan
City of Roanoke	2015	Climate Action Plan
Town of Blacksburg	2016	Climate Action Plan

## Underway

Locality	Year Anticipated	Title or Program
Loudoun County	2023-24	Loudoun County Energy Strategy
Prince William County	Not specified	Climate Action Plan
City of Alexandria	Not specified	Energy and Climate Change Action Plan
City of Fairfax	TBD	TBD
City of Falls Church	TBD	Climate Change Mitigation Energy Action Plan
City of Fredericksburg	TBD	Environmental Action Plan
City of Manassas	2023	Climate Action Plan
City of Newport News	TBD	Climate Change and Resilience Master Plan
City of Richmond	2023-24	RVAGreen 2050: Climate Equity Action Plan

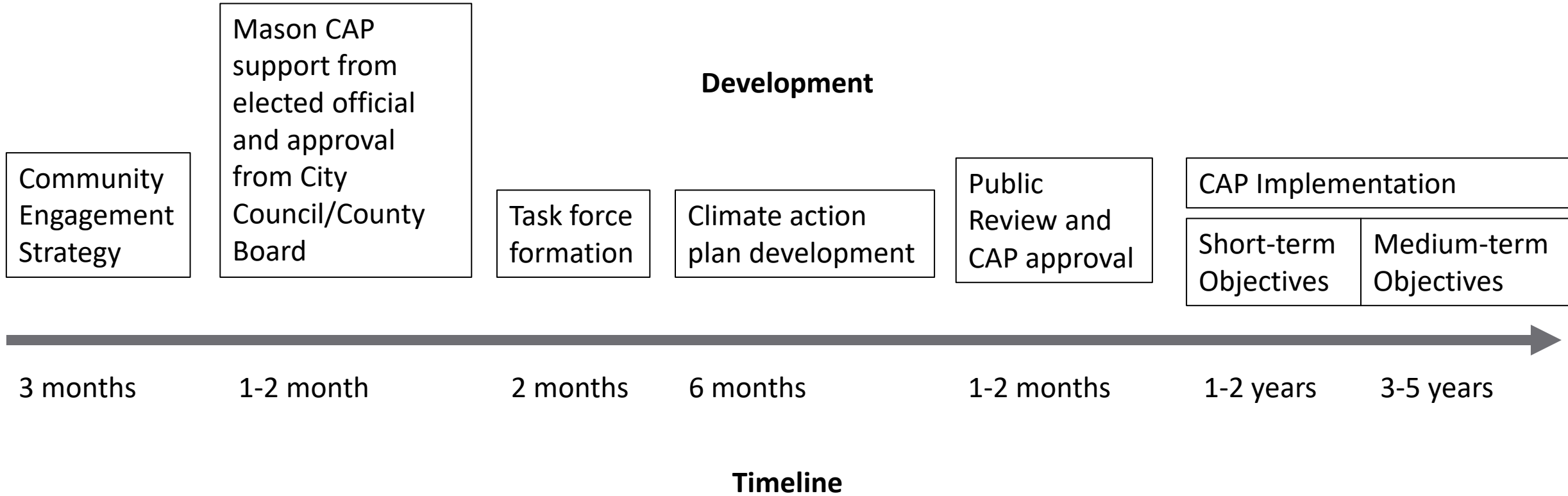
# Local Climate Action Planning (LCAP) Process

- The LCAP process is different for each community
  - Tailoring process to community's needs, resources, motivations, and constraints
- Steps for Climate Action Planning

1. Planning and preparation
2. Formal approval
3. Development of CAP (in brackets)
4. Implementation
5. Feedback and reassessment

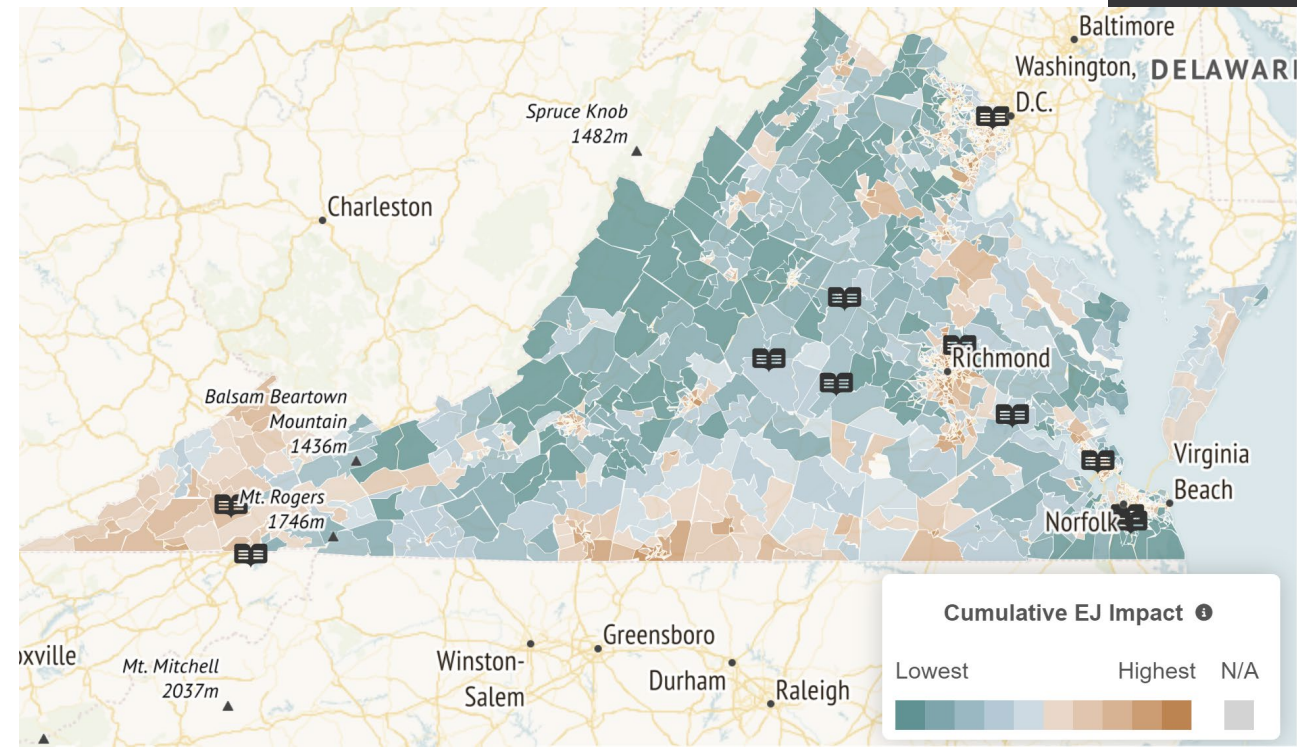


# Mason's Local CAP Initiative Project Overview



# Measuring Environmental Justice

- EPA's EJScreen
- State of California's CalEnviroScreen
- CDC-ATSDR's Environmental Justice Index
- WH CEQ's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
- Mapping for Environmental Justice (UC-Berkeley)'s Virginia map
  - Cumulative impacts relative to Virginia



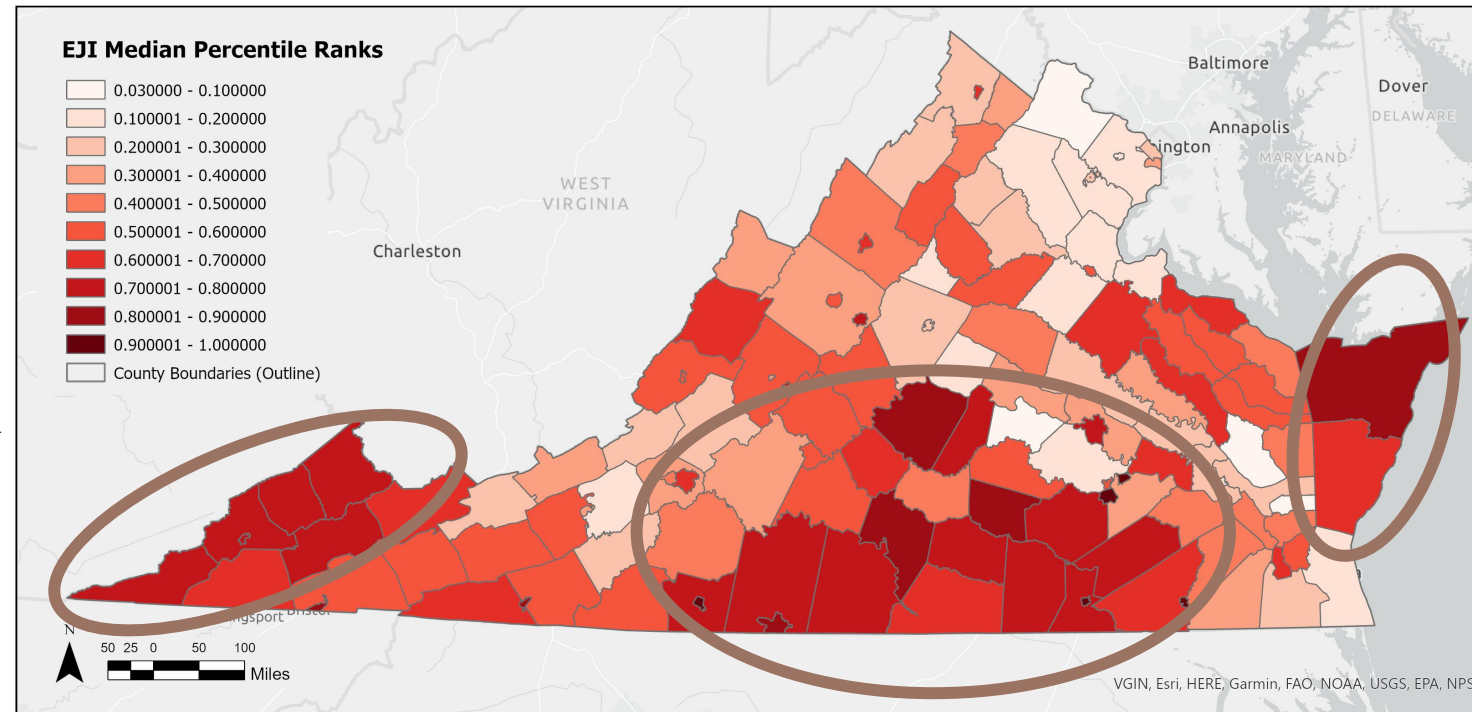
# Local Climate Action Planning Initiative (LCAPI)

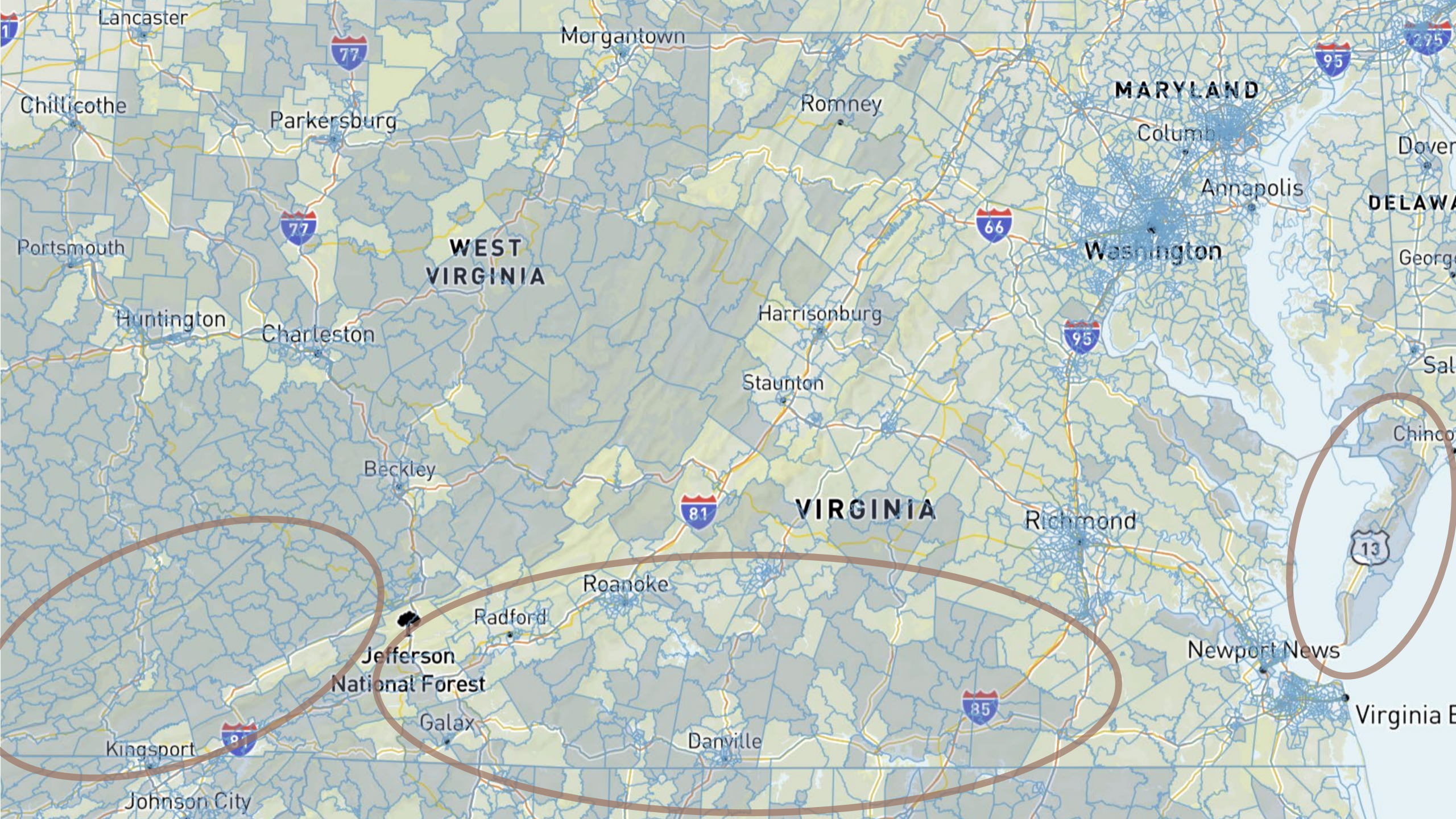
- Goals:
  1. Identify high priority areas throughout the Commonwealth and select a locality
- Environmental Justice Index
  - Lowest overall score
  - Highest environmental burden
  - Highest social vulnerability
  - Highest health vulnerability

## • ~~Black Vulnerability:~~

- ~~Disproportionate burden of air quality, noise, and other environmental burdens on communities of color, particularly in the Southern/South-Central regions of the state.~~
- ~~Historical and ongoing environmental racism, including siting of hazardous waste facilities, coal and lead mines, lack of parks, pre-1980 homes, walkability, proximity to highways/airports/railroads~~

Virginia Localities, Environmental Injustice Rankings





Lancaster

Morgantown

Chillicothe

Parkersburg

Romney

MARYLAND

Columb

Annapolis

DELAWARE

Portsmouth

WEST VIRGINIA

Washington

Huntington

Charleston

Harrisonburg

Staunton

Georg

Beckley

VIRGINIA

Richmond

Chinco

81

13

Roanoke

Radford

Jefferson National Forest

Galax

Danville

85

Newport News

Virginia B

Kingsport

Johnson City

# Role of effective community engagement

- For students to be successful in energy or climate policy, they *must* practice effective community engagement in the policymaking process.
- Value of applied learning and student experiences with different communities across the Commonwealth
- Tailoring a CAP approach to facilitate diverse and equitable community engagement
  - Understanding the challenges and opportunities within the community
  - Building trust through reliability and active listening
  - Creating space that elevates diverse perspectives and facilitates collaboration

# Components of the Mason LCAPI Community Engagement Strategy

- Community engagement strategy
  - Development of LCAP's engagement that is tailored to community needs and resources
  - Identify realistic pathways for delivering ambitious actions and building CAP buy-in
  - Identification of community approaches to develop familiarity and build trust
    - Identify gaps in knowledge and follow-up with community interviews
    - Connect and tailor Mason LCAPI model's inherent strengths with the community needs and stakeholder priorities
- Community CAP-readiness Assessment (a preliminary community needs assessment)
  - Identification of the existing strengths of the locality and their ability to conduct a CAP with Mason, the existing weaknesses of the locality in their ability to conduct a CAP, the existing opportunities and efforts in the community that will complement CAP efforts, and the existing threats that would impede a CAP effort.
  - Analysis of the needs, resources, motivations, and constraints that will impact the community engagement strategy
    - Identification of locality's socio-economic context and future trends
    - Identify marginalized groups that have been excluded from the locality's past engagement, when possible

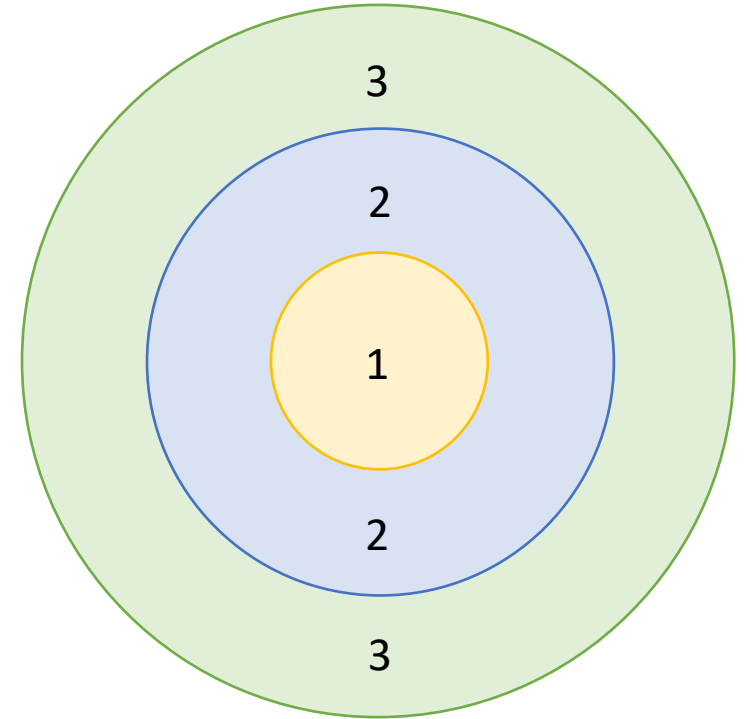
# Tiers of Community Engagement

Concentric Circles of Constituencies  
Richard Fenno, Jr., *Homestyle* (1978)

**Tier 1: Decision Makers** – The person(s), governing body, or department that are the deciding entity for CAP approval.

**Tier 2: Potential Partners and Collaborators** – Individuals and organizations that would be important to include in CAP development or a future task force.

**Tier 3: Community Engagers** – Individuals that are the LCAPI's introductions to the community. These people have insider knowledge of the community that is relevant to understanding the community's dynamics and perspectives. Tier 3 individuals might not end up being directly involved in the CAP development, but they ideally have experience working on energy, environmental, or EJ-related issues in the community. Ideally, these folks have worked with Tier 1-2 people before and can provide recommendations, communication insight, and potentially introductions.



# Next steps and Educational Opportunities

- Expansion into Mason LCAP's top-25 prioritized communities
- Increasing in-the-field experiences for students and developing skills like:
  - GHG accounting
  - Demand forecasting
  - EMS development
  - Adaptation and mitigation planning
  - Community engagement, coalition-building, collaborative governance
- Partnerships with other universities, organizations, and experts across Virginia

# Questions

