

2018 SESSION
(SB972)

GOVERNOR'S VETO

Pursuant to Article V, Section 6, of the Constitution of Virginia, I veto Senate Bill 972, which would restrict local authority and prohibit the adoption of local regulations governing combustible landscape cover materials.

Outlined in § 27-97 of the Code of Virginia, local governing bodies are authorized to adopt fire and life safety regulations that are more extensive in scope than the Statewide Fire Prevention Code.

Senate Bill 972 is contrary to that long-standing principle in Virginia and prohibits a local governing body from adopting standards to protect structures and citizens from fires involving combustible landscape materials.

Fire departments across Virginia have experienced many substantial fires in recent years caused by combustible ground cover. Our local governments must have the necessary tools to address these fire hazards, and this legislation hinders their ability to protect the life safety of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

During the Reconvened Session, I offered an amendment to address the fire and life safety concerns expressed by Virginia's fire service. That amendment would have narrowed the scope of the bill and provided a higher-level fire protection for residential structures. That amendment was rejected.

Accordingly, I veto this bill.

GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION

1. Line 122, enrolled, after *bushes*.

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The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to any (a) residential care facility operated by any state agency, (b) assisted living facility licensed or subject to licensure pursuant to Chapter 18 (§ 63.2-1800 et seq.) of Title 63.2, (c) student residence facility owned or operated by a public institution of higher education, (d) building containing one or more dwelling units, (e) hotel or motel regularly used or intended to be used to provide overnight sleeping accommodations for one or more persons, or (f) rooming house regularly used or intended to be used to provide overnight sleeping accommodations.

