
VIRGINIA STATE BUDGET

2026 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB30 (Chapter)

Bill Order » Office of Education » Item 145

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Item 145	First Year - FY2027	Second Year - FY2028
Educational and General Programs (10000)	\$37,041,071	\$36,923,096
Higher Education Instruction (100101)	\$1,499,865	\$1,499,865
Higher Education Research (100102)	\$17,681,183	\$17,563,208
Higher Education Academic (100104)	\$7,153,696	\$7,153,696
Higher Education Institutional Support (100106)	\$4,725,581	\$4,725,581
Operation and Maintenance Of Plant (100107)	\$5,980,746	\$5,980,746
Fund Sources:		
General	\$34,912,398	\$34,794,423
Higher Education Operating	\$2,128,673	\$2,128,673

Authority: Title 23.1, Chapter 28, and Title 28.2, Chapter 11, Code of Virginia.

A. This Item includes general and nongeneral fund appropriations to support institutional initiatives that help meet statewide goals described in the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005 (Chapters 933 and 945, 2005 Acts of Assembly).

B. If sufficient appropriations are not made available by the Commonwealth, it shall not be necessary for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to reallocate funds from existing research projects to provide the funding for research mandated in the Code of Virginia or in the Appropriation Act.

C. Out of this appropriation, \$637,876 and 6.85 positions the first year and \$637,876 and 6.85 positions the second year from the general fund is designated to support an Aquaculture Genetics and Breeding Technology Center at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The center shall coordinate its efforts with the repletion program of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

D. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the development of a disease resistant native oyster remains a high priority for oyster-related research activities at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

E. Out of this appropriation, \$68,391 the first year and \$68,391 the second year from the general fund is provided for the continuation of the Clean Marina Program. This additional funding will allow the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to the Commonwealth's marinas in an effort to improve water quality.

F. Out of this appropriation, \$785,196 the first year and \$667,221 the second year from the general fund is designated for the monitoring of the Chesapeake Bay's blue crab population. This additional support will permit the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to generate the data necessary to develop fishery management plans,

determine in-danger habitats, and project the annual blue crab catch. These amounts are also designated to support surveys to assess juvenile blue crab stock.

G. Notwithstanding Chapter 719, 1999 Acts of Assembly, out of this appropriation, \$159,579 the first year and \$159,579 the second year from the general fund shall be provided to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to support the Fishery Resource Grant Fund and Program. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the State Comptroller upon written request of the President of the College of William and Mary.

H. Out of this appropriation, \$432,894 and 3.15 positions the first year and \$432,894 and 3.15 positions the second year from the general fund is designated to support research on sea level rise and state-of-the-art storm surge modeling, as well as for subcontracting with the College of William and Mary's Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative (VCRC) to conduct policy and legal analyses of stakeholder-driven adaptation responses to sea level rise, in support of the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency. The center, a collaborative partnership involving the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Old Dominion University, and the VCRC, shall work with municipalities both along coastal Virginia and throughout the Commonwealth to develop useful resilience strategies.

I. Out of this appropriation, \$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year from the general fund is designated for the establishment of a marine conservation fellowship program in partnership with Virginia-based marine science education programs and conservation museums.

J. Out of this appropriation, \$188,086 and one position the first year and \$188,086 and one position the second year from the general fund is designated for supporting a network engineer, maintenance contracts, and staff training.

K. Out of this appropriation, \$406,075 and 2.70 positions the first year and \$406,075 and 2.70 positions the second year from the general fund is designated for a postdoctoral researcher and two research technicians, research-related supplies and materials, and ongoing service center costs to monitor the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

L. Out of this appropriation, \$403,000 the first year and \$403,000 the second year from the general fund is designated for evaluating the ecological health of the Elizabeth River, monitoring the performance of past restoration projects, and providing scientific guidance on development of new restoration projects. Every fifth year a State of the Elizabeth River Scorecard report on pollution levels in the Elizabeth River shall be produced. The scorecard shall include, at a minimum, an assessment of fish health data including cancer levels, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons levels, and benthic community condition, in correlation with water and sediment contaminant analyses from the Elizabeth River.

M. The appropriation for the fund source Higher Education Operating in this Item shall be considered a sum sufficient appropriation, which is an estimate of the amount of revenues to be collected for the educational and general program under the terms of the management agreement between the College of William and Mary and the Commonwealth, as set forth in Chapters 933 and 943 of the 2006 Acts of Assembly.

N. Out of this appropriation, \$386,668 and 2.75 positions the first year and \$386,668 and 2.75 positions the second year from the general fund is provided for an annual survey of submerged bay grasses and the development of best management practices for oyster aquaculture that supports co-existence with bay grasses. The survey is also intended to assist in evaluating attainment of water quality standards, permitting efforts of other state agencies, and evaluating progress towards meeting the Chesapeake Bay Program goals.

O. Out of this appropriation, \$185,000 the first year and \$185,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for a cooperative research program on shellfish aquaculture and seagrass. The research program is intended to determine how aquaculture activity affects the recovery rate of ecologically functional eelgrass beds

and develop a landscape-level ecological model that can inform management decisions about how to apportion habitats within the entire coastal bay system on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

P. Out of this appropriation, \$225,000 the first year and \$225,000 the second year from the general fund is designated to enhance Virginia Sea Grant's workforce and professional development programming, and the Commonwealth's capacity to address Chesapeake Bay restoration goals through fellowships with state agencies. Funding will boost capacity and competitiveness of the Virginia Sea Grant program to pursue new federal resources, advance a statewide platform for resilience and expand core workforce development and research in the Commonwealth.

Q. 1. Out of this appropriation, \$1,000,000 the first year and \$1,000,000 the second year from the general fund is designated for Atlantic menhaden research and reporting. This funding shall be used for Atlantic menhaden research necessary to inform a scientifically defensible and ecologically meaningful Chesapeake Bay harvest cap. This report will be generated by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in collaboration with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and with the cooperation of relevant stakeholders, including recreational anglers, the reduction and bait fishery sectors, and non-governmental organizations. VIMS will create an annual proposal to draw from this funding, until delivery of the final report that provides an approach to setting a scientifically-defensible Chesapeake Bay harvest cap. The development of this approach may be informed by research on (i) the seasonal abundance of Atlantic menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay; (ii) the movement rates of Atlantic menhaden between the Atlantic coast and the Chesapeake Bay; (iii) the impacts of predator (e.g. striped bass, osprey, and other species) demand and consumption of Atlantic menhaden on the Atlantic menhaden population; (iv) the spatial and temporal patterns of the Atlantic menhaden commercial fishing effort in the Chesapeake Bay; (v) and the possibility of localized depletion of Atlantic menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. This work can utilize recommendations from the report delivered October 1, 2023, titled "Atlantic Menhaden Research Planning" and/or the expected December 2026 deliverables from the SCMFIS-funded project titled "Development of a Research Roadmap for Atlantic Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay."

2. The Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement and the Virginia Economic Development Authority, in consultation with the Menhaden Management Advisory Committee of the Virginia Marine Resource Commission, will contribute analysis and recommendations to the Menhaden report on potential workforce impacts. Beginning with fiscal year 2028 and in subsequent fiscal years thereafter, the Virginia Marine Resource Commission shall provide new scientific data and research products generated under this item by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, to inform the annual discussion and deliberations of Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on any proposed changes to the coastwide or Chesapeake Bay total allowable catch levels. The committee report shall include (i) projected workforce impacts from coastwide and Chesapeake Bay changes in total allowable catch, and (ii) recommendations for addressing impacts to workers by changes in total allowable catch.

3. VIMS shall present report progress, current findings and any recommendations, along with their annual proposal to draw from the menhaden funding for the following year to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, the Ecological Reference Points Workgroup of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Menhaden Management Advisory Committee of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, yearly by October 1.