2026 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB30 (Enrolled)

Bill Order » Office of Commerce and Trade » Item 114

Virginia Tourism Authority

Item 114	First Year - FY2027	Second Year - FY2028
Tourist Promotion (53600)	**$34,185,719**	**$27,885,719**
Tourist Promotion Services (53607)	$34,185,719	$27,885,719
Fund Sources:		
General	$34,185,719	$27,885,719

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 22, Article 8, Code of Virginia.

A.1. The Department of Transportation shall pay to the Virginia Tourism Authority $1,425,000 the first year and $1,425,000 the second year for continued operation of the Welcome Centers, of which $225,000 the first year and $225,000 the second year is for maintenance of the Danville Welcome Center. The Department of Transportation shall fund maintenance at each state Welcome Center based on the agreed-upon service levels contained in the Memorandum of Agreement between the Virginia Tourism Authority and the Department of Transportation.

2. To the extent necessary to fund the operations of the Welcome Centers, the Virginia Tourism Authority is authorized to collect fees paid by businesses for display space at the Welcome Centers.

B. Upon authorization of the Governor, the Virginia Tourism Authority may transfer funds appropriated to it by this act to a nonstock corporation.

C. Prior to July 1 of each fiscal year, the Virginia Tourism Authority shall provide to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget a report of its operating plan. Prior to September 1 of each fiscal year, the authority shall provide to the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget a detailed expenditure report and a listing of the salaries and bonuses for all authority employees for the prior fiscal year. All three reports shall be prepared in the formats as previously approved by the Department of Planning and Budget.

D. The State Comptroller shall disburse the first and second year appropriations in twelve equal monthly installments. The Director, Department of Planning and Budget may authorize an increase in disbursements for any month, not to exceed the total appropriation for the fiscal year, if such an advance is necessary to meet payment obligations.

E.1. Out of the amounts in this Item, $5,550,000 the first year and $4,250,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for grants to regional and local tourism authorities and other tourism entities to support their efforts. From the grants provided from the amounts included in this paragraph, priority consideration shall be given to funding for the Daniel Boone Visitor Center, as well as $450,000 the first year and $450,000 the second year to the Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority, and $50,000 the first year and $50,000 the second year for events sponsored by Special Olympics Virginia, $100,000 the first year to the Blue Highway Festival, $200,000 the first year to the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame, $1,000,000 the first year to the Museum of Black Women Innovators,

and $2,100,000 the first year and $2,100,000 the second year to the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority for the Spearhead Trails initiative.

2. Out of the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority, up to $25,000 the first year and up to $25,000 the second year from the general fund shall be provided to support a peer-support program for Virginia veterans in partnership with the Spearhead Trails initiative. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services shall provide assistance in establishing such program upon the request of the board of the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority.

3. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority to support the Spearhead Trails initiative shall be provided in its entirety in the first quarter of the fiscal year. The Southwest Virginia Regional Recreation Authority shall submit annual financial statements to the Virginia Tourism Authority by September 1 each year.

4. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Blue Highway Festival shall be provided in its entirety in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

5. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame shall be provided in its entirety in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

6. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Museum of Black Women Innovators shall be provided in its entirety in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

F. The Virginia Tourism Authority shall place a high priority on marketing rural areas of the state.

G. Out of the amounts in this Item, $3,100,000 in the first year and $3,100,000 in the second year from the general fund is provided to supplement appropriations to promote Virginia's tourism industries through an enhanced advertising campaign. Of these amounts, at least $1,000,000 the first year and $1,000,000 the second year shall be used to support a cooperative advertising program to partner with private sector tourism businesses and regional tourism entities to advertise Virginia as a tourism destination. The state dollars shall be used to incentivize private and regional tourism marketing funds on a $1.00 for $1.00 basis whereby the Virginia Tourism Corporation shall enter into agreements to undertake joint advertising purchases to promote Virginia and specific facilities with private sector and regional partners.

H. Out of the amounts in this Item, $150,000 the first year and $150,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to support a tourism development initiative in the County of Henrico.

I. Out of the amounts in this Item, $25,000 the first year and $25,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to support the Carver Price Legacy Museum.

J. With such funds as are available, the Virginia Tourism Authority shall collaborate with "Opening Doors for Virginians with Disabilities" to maintain and update the Opening Doors for Virginians with Disabilities travel guide and establish a more user-friendly link to this information on the Virginia Tourism Corporation website home page.

K. Out of the amounts in this Item, $2,140,000 the first year and $2,140,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for grants to promote tourism in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-2320.2, Code of Virginia.

L. The Virginia Tourism Authority shall provide technical assistance to the City of Danville on how best to plan for increased tourism in the Southside region due to infrastructure improvements at the Virginia International Raceway and the opening of a casino in the City.

M. Out of the amounts in this Item, $330,012 the first year and $330,012 the second year from the general fund is provided to promote and advertise tourism in Virginia. These amounts include $130,012 in the first year and $130,012 in the second year for a partnership operated by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters to advertise Virginia Tourism, provided the Association contributes a total of at least $390,036 in television and radio advertising value to promote tourism in Virginia in the first year and $390,036 in the second year. Also included in these amounts is $100,000 the first year and $100,000 the second year to promote Virginia Parks, and $100,000 the first year and $100,000 the second year to promote Virginia's wineries.

N. Out of the amounts in this Item, $497,544 the first year and $497,544 the second year from the general fund is provided to purchase media in the Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Baltimore, Maryland markets through a partnership operated by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters, in association with its affiliates in other states in the region, provided that the Association can obtain contributions of at least $1,492,632 the first year and $1,492,632 the second year in television, radio, and station-related internet advertising value to promote tourism in Virginia.

O. Out of this appropriation, $125,000 the first year and $125,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to the City of Norfolk for Nauticus to support education programming for Schooner Virginia.

P.1. Out of this appropriation, $5,000,000 from the general fund the first year is provided for the Virginia Tourism Authority to support the Virginia Sports Incentive Grant Program established in § 2.2-2320.3, Code of Virginia. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the amounts in this paragraph provided for the Virginia Sports Incentive Grant Program be provided in its entirety in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

2. Out of the amounts in this paragraph, $3,000,000 the first year from the general fund is provided for sponsorship and partnership with and promotion of the 2027 LIV Golf Tournament hosted in Gainesville, Virginia at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Club. Out of the amounts in this paragraph, $500,000 the first year is provided for sponsorship and promotion of a globally broadcasted golf tournament held in GO Virginia Regions 1, 2, or 8 in 2026.

Q. Out of this appropriation, $1,500,000 the first year and $1,500,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for the Virginia Tourism Authority to develop a marketing campaign to attract out of state visitors from Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic communities.