

NRGRDA Legislative Committee Meeting

May 15, 2025

Call to Order:

Jozy Moore called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

Attendance:

Committee Members: Anita Groves, Robert Shafer, Allison Taylor, Tom Louisos, Craig Chapman, Daniel Hall

Staff: Jina Belcher, Jozy Moore

Additional NRGRDA Representatives: Greg Duckworth (Raleigh Commission)

Other: Joe Reidy (3PS)

Reports:

Jozy opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of NRGRDA's newly formed Legislative Committee: to establish regional priorities and advocate for legislation beneficial to the NRGRDA region.

Jina shared her vision for the committee, emphasizing the goal of setting annual legislative priorities prior to the regular session. She also suggested organizing an annual familiarization tour for legislators to showcase key projects and demonstrate the local impact of state-level decisions.

Discussion on Anticipated Special Session:

PEIA, Student Aid Formula, Tax Policy

PEIA

- Jozy reported that the Governor is expected to call a special session on PEIA, tax policy, and the student aid formula, though details and timing remain uncertain. The next scheduled legislative interims are June 22-24 (Stonewall) and September 7-9 (Charleston). A mid-July special session remains possible but is not confirmed.
- Daniel and Joe noted that Morrissey will need to negotiate a deal on PEIA before any special session. But even without an agreement, the Governor may proceed regardless of legislative support.

Student Aid Formula:

- Daniel highlighted the potential impact of declining public school enrollment on state funding, which could result in school closures and consolidations.

- Allison suggested the need for oversight on the use of school levy funds but acknowledged challenges in defining how this could be implemented.
- Allison also discussed supporting more flexible teacher certification pathways to help address the teacher shortage.

2025 Legislative Session Review:

- The group discussed HB 2014 (microgrid and data center legislation), which advanced quickly and caught many state and local officials off guard, limiting opportunities for input or amendments.
- Joe recommended inviting legislators to future committee meetings to provide insights on the legislative process and specific bills.

Identifying Policy Priorities for the 2026 Regular Session:

- Jozy will provide the committee with a detailed list of bills NRGRDA tracked during the 2025 session to identify potential opportunities for support in 2026.
- Daniel suggested NRGRDA consider drafting its own bill(s), with the fall as the target deadline to secure sponsors ahead of the January session.
- Jina proposed exploring changes to the Industrial Access Road Fund to prevent unspent funds from reverting to the state and instead allow them to accumulate for future county transportation projects or matching funds.
- Robert Shafer noted that Summersville's new home rule status allows it to collect an additional \$2 million annually via a 1% sales tax. He suggested pursuing legislation to extend home rule authority to counties.
- Joe mentioned that the November 2-4 legislative interims at Pipestem Resort provide an opportunity to organize a site tour or reception for legislators while they are in the NRGRDA region.

Action Items:

- The NRGRDA Legislative Committee will begin holding monthly meetings at 9 a.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. on June 26.