

# Research Rundown

## Goals

- ▶ Study relationships in climate and energy legislation
- ▶ Study influence of external sources on legislators
  - ▶ Lobbying
  - ▶ Donations
  - ▶ Testimony

## Scope

- ▶ Climate and energy bills from 2015 to 2021 in Virginia state legislature

## Relevance

- ▶ Environmental legislation is important
- ▶ Understanding how its made and what affects it is important

# Legislative Process

## Bill Lifetime

- ▶ Introduced to one of the two chambers
- ▶ Sent to an appropriate committee
- ▶ Voted on the floor
- ▶ Sent to an appropriate committee of the other chamber
- ▶ Voted on the floor of the other chamber
- ▶ Signed by the governor

## Bill Death

- ▶ 628 bills went to the first committee
- ▶ Only 287 bills made it to the first floor
- ▶ Over 90% of bill deaths occur in the committee steps

## Relaxed Record-Keeping Requirements

- ▶ VA ranked 46th in anti-corruption measures (Center of Public Integrity, 2020)
- ▶ Lobbyists are not mandated to disclose their positions or payments
- ▶ Testimonies are not consistently available

# Data

## Donors

- ▶ Web scraped off Virginia Public Access Project's website
- ▶ Every donation to state legislators from 1996 to Fall 2022
- ▶ Includes the donor, industry, and amount

## Bills

- ▶ Every environmental bill from 2015 to 2021
- ▶ Includes the committees involved and outcome

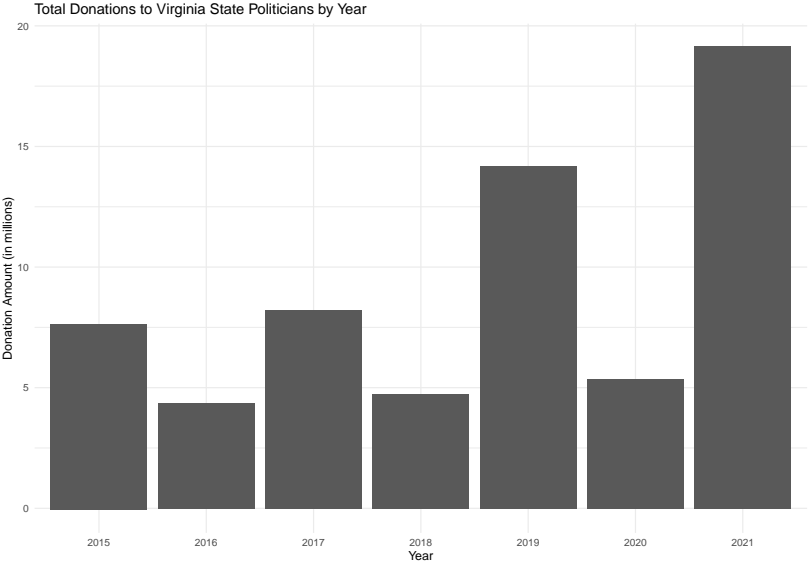
## Committees

- ▶ Every committee member from 2015 to 2021
- ▶ Includes the committee and position in the committee

## Politicians

- ▶ Every legislator from 2015-2021
- ▶ Includes their party, chamber, district, and first year in office

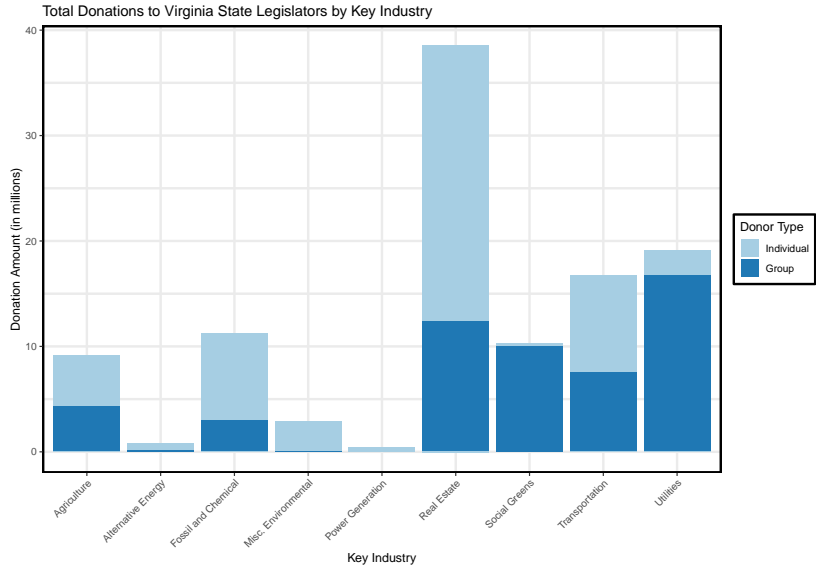
# Donations by Year



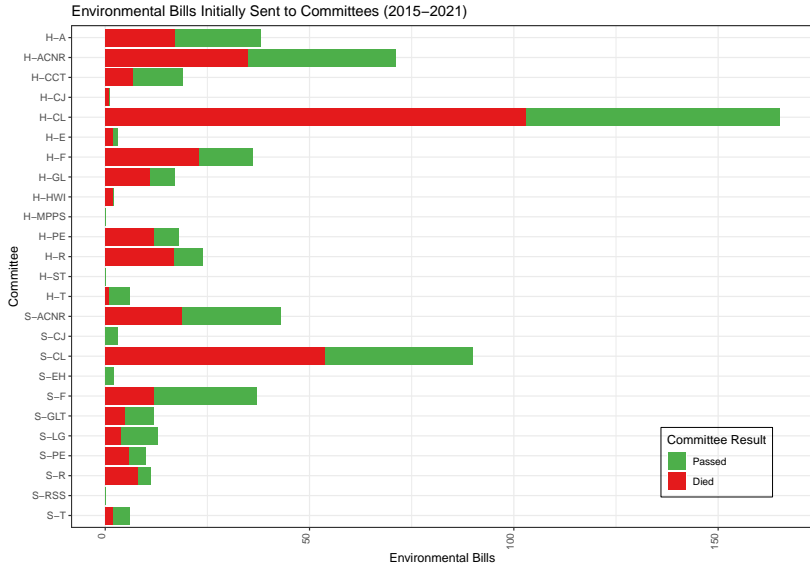
## Impactful Donors

- ▶ Want to focus less on donations with minimal impact
- ▶ Want to focus less on individual district influences
- ▶ “Group”:
  - ▶ Impactful organizations, corporations, and individuals
  - ▶ Force: At least \$20k in donations to favorite politician
  - ▶ Spread: Less than 80% of donations to favorite politician
  - ▶ 1.1% of donors, 49.7% of donations

# Donations by Key Industry



# Bills by Committee



## Comparison of Two (Four) Committees

### Commerce and Labor (CL)

- ▶ Senate and House
- ▶ 165 bills to House committee
- ▶ 90 bills to Senate committee

### Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources (ACNR)

- ▶ Senate and House
- ▶ 71 bills to House committee
- ▶ 43 bills to Senate committee

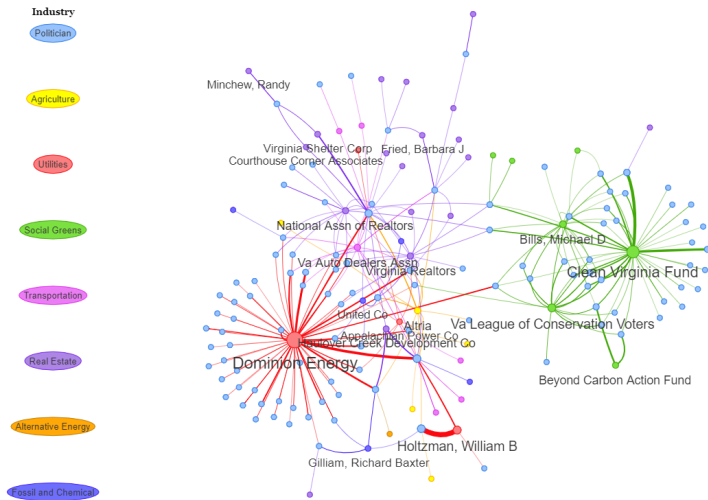
|                           | Combined-CL    | Combined-ACNR  |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mean First Year Elected   | 2005           | 2009           |
| Total Donations           | \$46.2 million | \$30.6 million |
| Dominion Energy Donations | \$5.5 million  | \$3.4 million  |
| Social Greens Donations   | \$2.6 million  | \$4.5 million  |
| % Died in Committee (H/S) | 62.4%/60.0%    | 49.3%/44.2%    |



# Network Map

## Network Map of Politicians and Donors by Industry

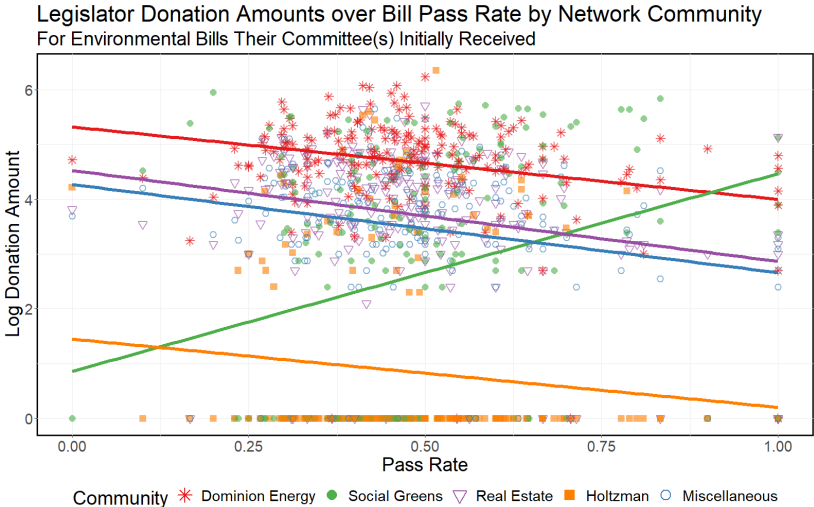
For Cumulative Donations from 2015-2021 of at least \$30,000



## Communities

| Community          | 1: Dom.<br>Energy | 2: SG      | 3: Real<br>Est. | 4:<br>Holtzman | 5: Misc.  |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Politicians        | 91                | 41         | 30              | 9              | 36        |
| Party<br>(D/I/R)   | 26/1/64           | 40/0/1     | 3/0/27          | 0/0/9          | 24/0/12   |
| Chamber<br>(H/S)   | 72/19             | 35/6       | 19/11           | 6/3            | 22/14     |
| Mean First<br>Year | 2010              | 2016       | 2006            | 2009           | 2003      |
| Donors             | 21                | 20         | 19              | 9              | 17        |
| Tot.<br>Donations  | \$27.8 mil        | \$11.8 mil | \$6.0 mil       | \$3.8 mil      | \$4.7 mil |

# Community Analysis



## Conclusion

- ▶ 4/5 communities had a negative correlation with the pass rate of environmental bills
- ▶ The “Social Greens” community had a positive correlation with the pass rate of environmental bills

## Further Research

- ▶ More years
- ▶ More states
- ▶ Committee chairs