



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

VIRGINIA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY BOARD REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 7, 2024

10:00 AM

In-Person & Virtual

Location:

**Blue Ridge Community College
Plecker Center, One College Way
Weyers Cave, VA**

Members Present

Jim Cheng
Leah Fremouw (Committee Chair)
John King
Delegate Michele Maldonado

Members Absent

None

Call to Order Leah Fremouw, Chair of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) Regional Council Committee, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call Ms. Shara Gibson, GO Virginia Program Manager at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll, and stated that a quorum of the Committee was present.

Public Comment Chair Fremouw opened the floor for public comment.

No members of the public appeared before the Committee for the public comment period.

Ms. Gibson noted that the staff had not received written public comment prior to the meeting

The public comment period was closed.

Informational Items Chris Lloyd provided an overview of GO Virginia's purpose and goals, offering context for new members. He detailed the program's origins, emphasizing its mission to drive regional

collaboration, support high-paying job creation, and strengthen economic competitiveness through partnerships among businesses, educational institutions, and local governments.

Shara Gibson followed with insights from previous regional council engagement workshops. She highlighted key progress areas, including modifications to match requirements to improve accessibility for distressed regions, updates to workforce metrics focusing on training outcomes, and expanded support for healthcare sector projects.

Cody Anderson, GO Virginia Program Administrator, provided an update on the implementation of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) recommendations. He reported significant progress, with full completion of recommendations expected by the first quarter of 2025. This update underscored the committee's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

Regional Council
Engagement Update

Chair Fremouw provided an overview of the results from the 2024 Regional Council Engagement. General takeaways included an emphasized need to foster a "laboratory mindset" for projects, encouraging innovative and transformative ideas, and supporting collaboration across regions to amplify outcomes. Chair Fremouw concluded by noting the insights and successes from previous workshops have created a foundation for the committee to build upon. The priorities identified will guide future initiatives, and committee's work will work to enhance communication, and support innovative projects

Regional Council
Engagement Working
Session

Chair Fremouw, engaged the committee in a discussion to define strategic priorities across four key themes: Connectivity, Collaboration, Innovation, and Productivity. Attendees emphasized the need for improved communication between regional councils and the state board. Suggestions included hosting regular leadership meetings, creating a feedback loop for project updates, and enhancing information-sharing across regions. he group highlighted opportunities for cross-regional partnerships, citing successful projects like GO-TEC and Project VITAL. Attendees identified emerging opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, energy, and

autonomous systems. The need for coordinated strategies involving industry, education, and government was emphasized.

Closing

Dr. John Downy, representing Blue Ridge Community College, shared reflections on the impact of GO Virginia projects on regional workforce development and economic growth. He emphasized the program's role as a transformative initiative for the Commonwealth.

Chair Fremouw outlined two immediate priorities. Establishing regional council designees to strengthen communication and representation and finalizing the committee charter to provide a clear framework for the committee's objectives and operations.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT