



*A unifying voice for Virginia's Forestry community.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Elizabeth Buhl**  
**804-278-8733**  
**ebuhl@vaforestry.org**

### **PAUL HOWE RETIRES AS VFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

RICHMOND, VA – Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) Executive Director Paul Howe is retiring from the position he has held for nearly 25 years effective in August 2019. “It has been my great privilege to serve Virginia’s forestry community for such a long period,” states Paul. “Now is the time for me to seek new opportunities and adventures, while VFA is poised to recruit new talent to move the organization into the future.”

During his tenure, Paul worked with key partners on many successful legislative efforts as part of his government relations duties, including:

- Passage of the Right to Practice Forestry Law, limiting local government powers to restrict forestry operations and timber harvests on private woodlands.
- Two upgrades in the Virginia Code protecting and providing recourse for Virginia’s forest landowners from timber theft, trespass, and larceny.
- Successful lobbying with Virginia Tech for initial funding of Extension regional forestry agents.
- Serving as an advisor on VDOF’s Forestry Water Quality Task Force and improvements to the Silviculture Forestry Water Quality Law.
- Passage of a Private Property Rights Constitutional Amendment to protect woodland owners.
- Elimination of the Virginia estate tax to support forest landowner generational property transition.
- Establishment of the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry as a new state cabinet position to better represent forestry interests.
- Advising state officials in the initial and subsequent publication of the Economic Impact of the Agriculture and Forestry on the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Attaining the 90,000 pound Forest Products Truck Weight Permit and other improvements to the Virginia Code and regulations benefiting loggers and the wood products industry.
- Successful funding of the Reforestation of Timberlands program and overhaul of the Forest Products Tax in support of reforestation cost-share through the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF).
- Pro-active representation of forestry in the ongoing development of the Commonwealth’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan and other conservation measures.
- Establishment of and funding for the Agriculture and Forestry Industry Development Fund, providing grants to new and expanding forestry businesses.
- Co-organization of annual meetings and various forums with Virginia governors and other elected officials.
- Submission of many important position papers and letters to state and federal officials and agencies on behalf of the forestry community on a host of economic and environmental issues, often with a wide array of national and state partners.



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- Paul had a strong advocacy hand in the passage of other state legislation beneficial to VFA members and, just as importantly, in the defeat of proposed legislation that would have been detrimental to the practice of forestry and to forest product businesses.
- He worked with key members to form the association's Virginia Forest Resources Political Action Committee, aiding greatly in outreach to Virginia General Assembly Senators and Delegates.

Paul served as publisher and advisor of the quarterly Virginia Forests magazine, oversaw VFA's annual convention and Forestry Summits, and served for many years as Secretary and administrator for the Virginia Forestry Educational Foundation. With key members, he formed the state Sustainable Forestry Initiative committee and through this group the establishment of the SHARP logger training program and augmentation of forest landowner education efforts at Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and the Environment. In 2003 under his leadership, the association purchased and owns outright its current headquarters in Richmond. Earlier in his career, Paul helped create, develop, and initiate in many states the Log A Load For Kids charity, contributing millions of dollars to children's hospitals. Paul also represented Virginia as part of the National Council of Forestry Association Executives and Forest Industry Association Council, including a tenure as chair of both groups. Howe plans to pursue government relations and forestry project opportunities.

VFA President John Magruder remarks, "Paul has been a leader on forestry issues for many years and we wish him all the best on his retirement. The VFA Executive Board plans to begin an immediate search for a new director that will continue to lead the association as the unifying voice for Virginia's forestry community for years to come."

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**About Virginia Forestry Association:**

Founded in 1943, the Virginia Forestry Association (VFA) is a not-for-profit organization with the mission of representing Virginia's diverse forestry community and promoting the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources to ensure their long term social benefits for all Virginians. VFA consists of a diverse membership, including forest landowners, foresters, forest products businesses, loggers, forestry consultants, and a variety of individuals and groups who are concerned about the future well-being of Virginia's forest resources and are willing to collaborate for the good of the industry. VFA seeks to be the unifying voice of Virginia's forestry community through advocacy, outreach, and communications that enhance the public's perception of the industry. Learn more at [www.veforestry.org](http://www.veforestry.org).