



# Pollution Prevention Programs

At DEQ and Throughout the Commonwealth

---

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

December 10, 2024



# Welcome & Agenda

- DEQ and Pollution Prevention (P2)
- The Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP)
- The Virginia Green Program
- The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards
- Food Waste
- Additional Information about Pollution Prevention and Waste Management





# Objectives



Understand the importance of pollution prevention



List some of the pollution prevention programs at DEQ



Know how to identify Virginia Green businesses



Find additional pollution prevention resources



Identify at least one action you can take to prevent pollution

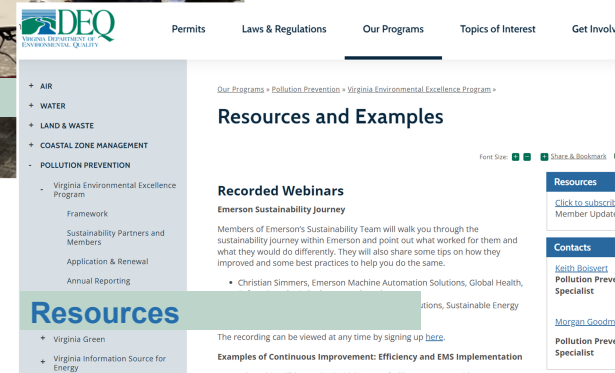
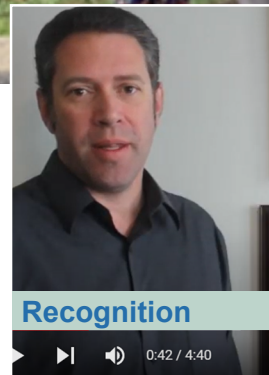


# What does DEQ do to protect our environment from pollution?

## Administers programs to prevent pollution



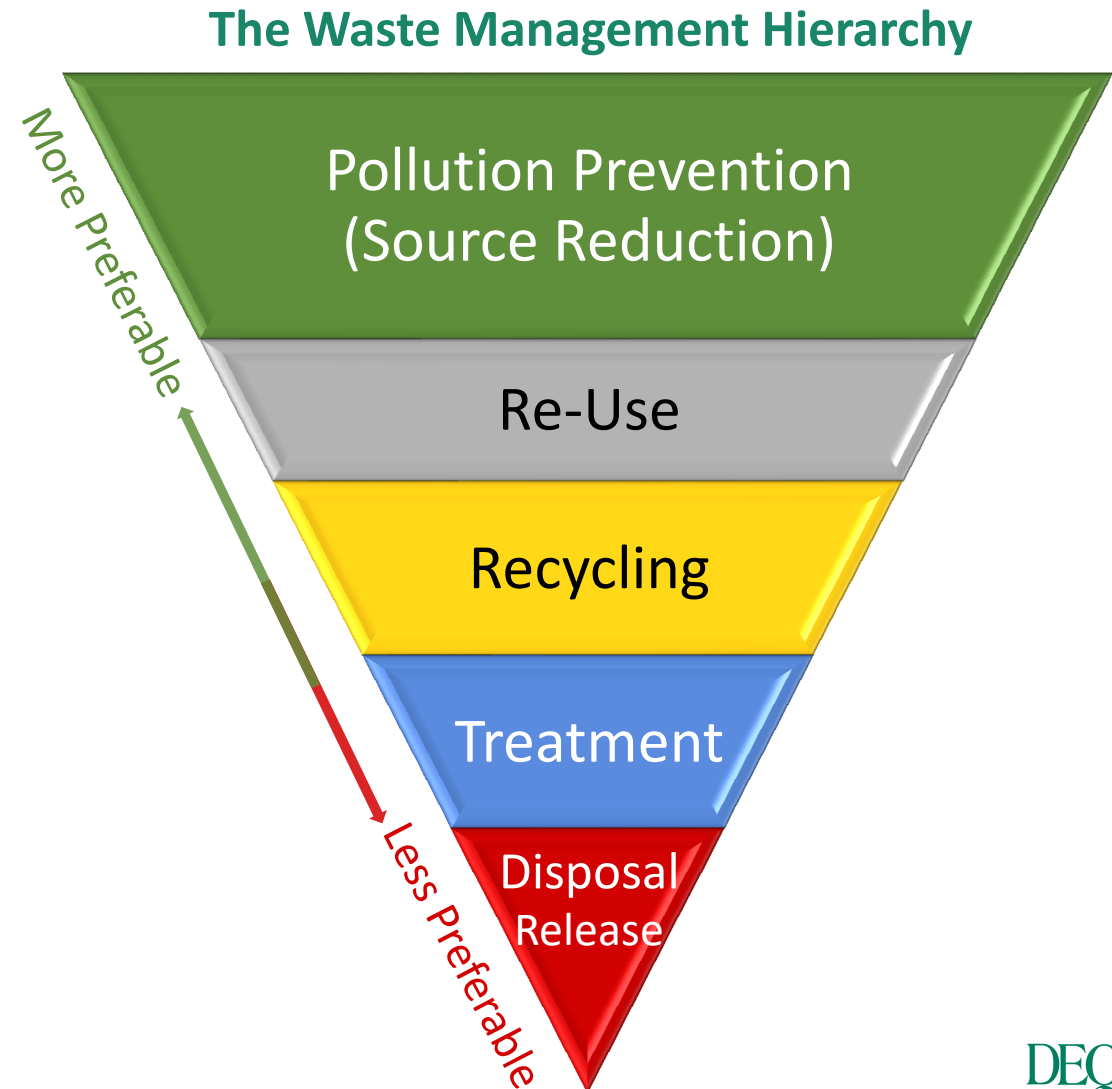
Sets limits on polluting activities through permits and regulations





# What is Pollution Prevention?

- **Pollution Prevention** means eliminating or reducing the use, generation, or release at the source of environmental waste.
- Motivating Virginia businesses to minimize their environmental footprint through actions that exceed what is required while enhancing their bottom line.
- Educating all Virginians about pollution prevention.





# What is an Environmental Management System (EMS)?

- A way for organizations to ensure they follow environmental regulations and their own internal environmental policies
- May include:





# Greening of Government

- DEQ leads the Commonwealth's Greening of Government efforts
- Statewide initiatives include:





# Pollution Prevention at DEQ

## Virginia Environmental Excellence Program



**Virginia Environmental  
Excellence Program**

**Virginia Green**

**Governor's Environmental  
Excellence Awards**



# Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP)



## What is it?

- A voluntary program supporting facilities and organizations going above and beyond

## Who can participate?

- Facilities, businesses, governments, and other organizations with a proven track record of environmental responsibility

## What are the benefits to businesses?

- Program assistance, recognition for organizations' impacts, potential permit fee discounts, VEEP workshops

## What are the benefits to residents of Virginia?

- Encourages business practices that are "cleaner and greener"



# Sustainability Partners Track



## Types of facilities

- Organizations that have made environmental sustainability part of their operations
- One application per organization



## Organizational Culture

- Culture of environmental sustainability
- Commitment to future projects



## Environmental Compliance

- Facilities must have a record of sustained compliance



## Key Components

- Recent achievements
- Collaborative partnerships
- Community involvement



## Application process

- Applications accepted annually
- Generally in the spring
- Email completed applications

# Environmental Management System (EMS) Track



## Types of facilities

- Facilities that use an EMS to manage and reduce impacts



## Three levels of participation

- E2 – just getting started with EMS
- E3 – fully implemented EMS
- E4 – mature EMS



## Environmental Compliance

- Facilities must have a record of sustained compliance



## Reporting

- Annual reports required



## Application process

- Accepted on a rolling basis
- Email completed applications



Questions?

# Pollution Prevention at DEQ

Virginia Green



Virginia Environmental Excellence Program

**Virginia Green**

Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards



# Virginia Green



- Partnership with DEQ, the VA Tourism Corporation, the VA Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association, VA State Parks, and the Virginia Green Travel Alliance (VGTA)



- Network of tourism-related organizations



Educate



Engage



Results

- Two levels of participation ([viriniagreen.net](http://viriniagreen.net))

Commitment  
Level

Full Certification Level  
(re-certification every two years)

# What can you expect from a Virginia Green business?



Recycling  
No  
polystyrene  
disposables



Energy  
efficiency  
Water  
conservation



Green events  
Consumer  
engagement



# Benefits for Virginia Green businesses



Green  
Business  
Directory

Training and  
Technical  
Assistance

Travel Star  
Awards

Annual  
Conference

Spring 2025 at Busch Gardens



# Pollution Prevention at DEQ

## Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards



Virginia Environmental Excellence Program

Virginia Green

Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards



# Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards



## Sponsors

- DEQ
- Department of Conservation & Recreation

## Eligibility

- Record of sustained compliance
- Businesses and industrial facilities
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Government agencies

## Award Categories

- Environmental & Sustainability Program
- Environmental & Sustainability Project
- Land Conservation
- Green Commonwealth
- Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

## Application

- Applications available in September
- Due December 12
- Email completed applications
- Winners announced in late March (at Environment Virginia?)



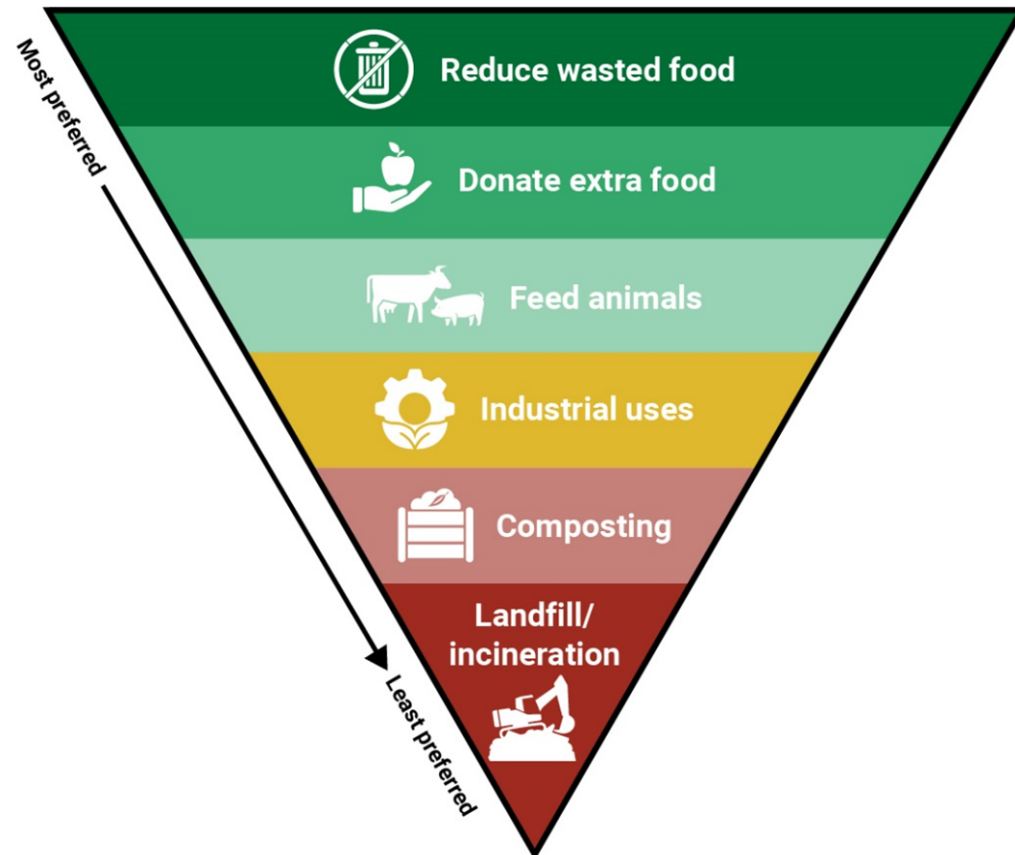


Questions?

# EO 17: Recognizing the Value of Recycling and Waste Reduction

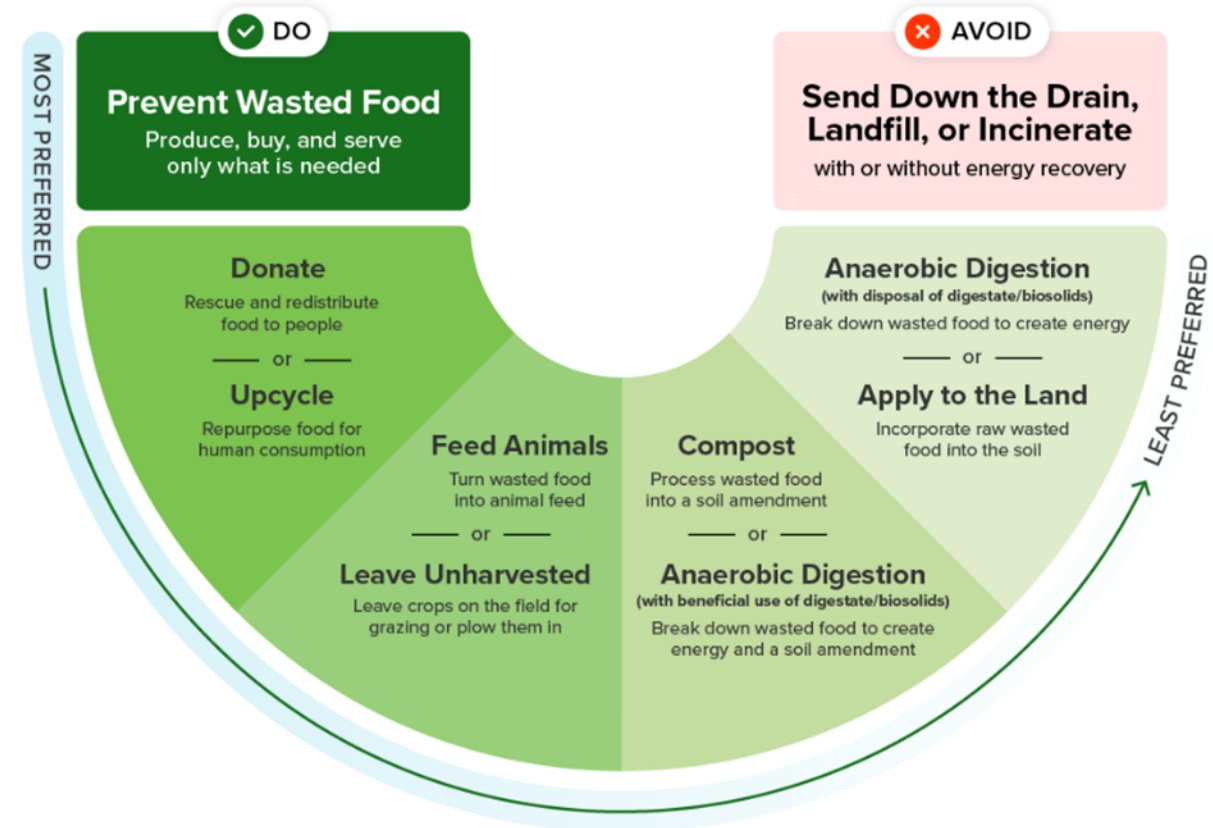


## Food Management Hierarchy



## Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



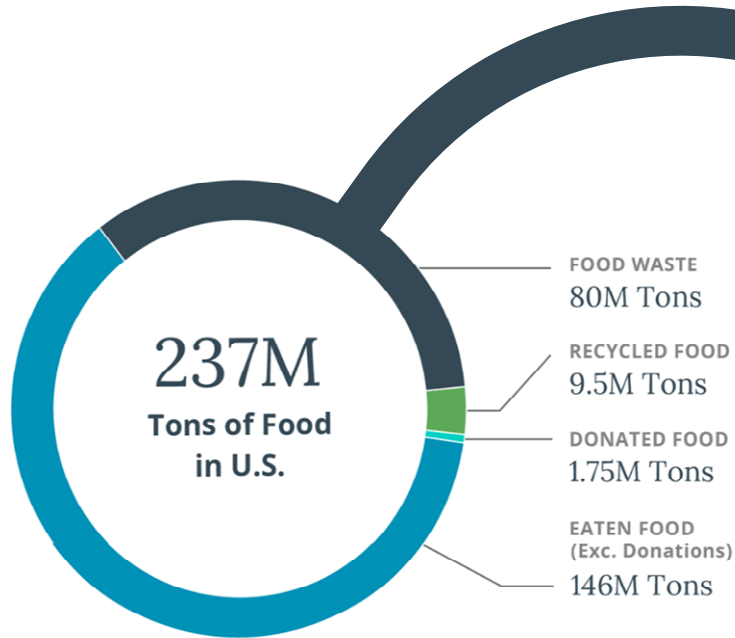


# Climate Pollution Reduction Grants



- Competitive award process open to Virginia agencies, colleges and universities
- Each grant will have two distinct funded program requirements:
  - Edible Food Project
  - Food Waste Composting Project
- Program will:
  - Support statewide education and engagement on the importance of food waste reduction
  - Provide opportunities for increased edible food rescue and food donation to food insecure communities
  - Reduce emissions associated with landfilled organic waste by diverting it from landfills

# What are we wasting?



Source: ReFED/2023 Data (Published Nov 2024)



**ReFED**

<https://refed.org/food-waste/the-problem>

## Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste: EPA

What resources go into a year of food loss and waste in the U.S.?

\*excluding impacts of waste management, such as landfill methane emissions



**Greenhouse gas emissions** of more than 42 coal-fired power plants



**Enough water and energy** to supply more than 50 million homes



The **amount of fertilizer** used in the U.S. to grow all plant-based foods for U.S. human consumption

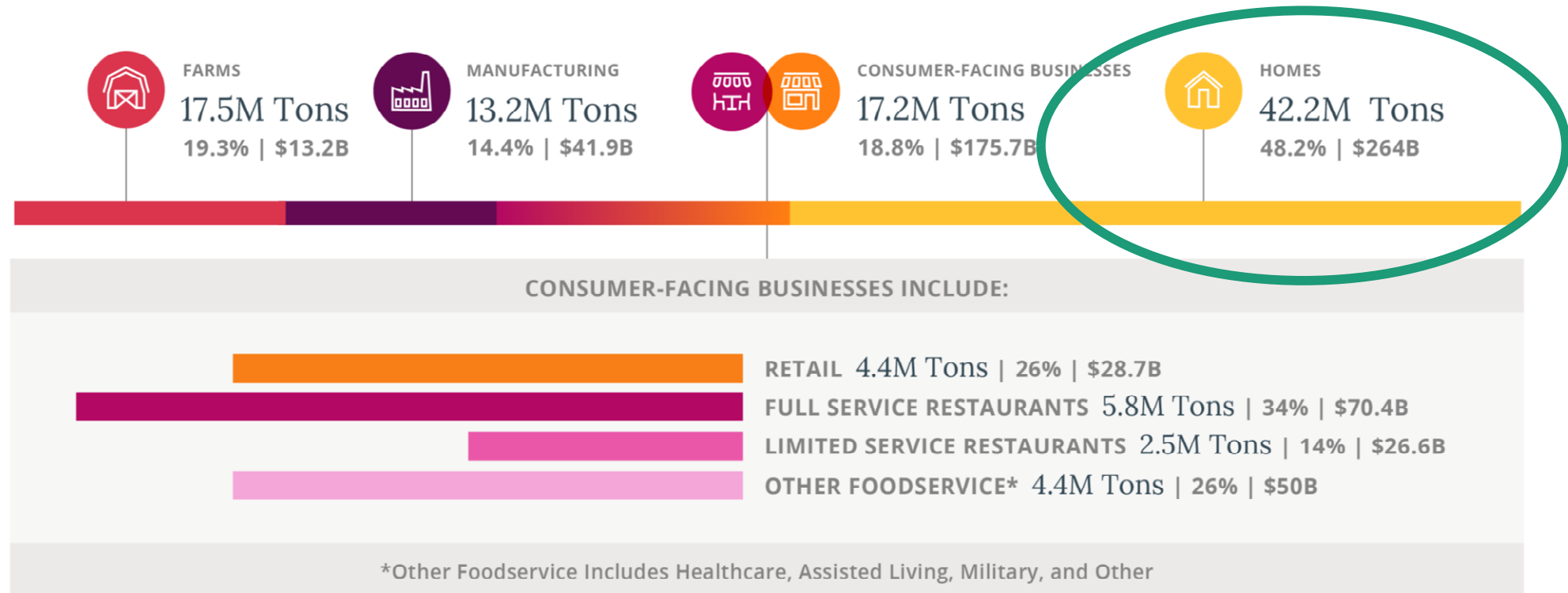


An **area of agricultural land** equal to California and New York

Learn more: [www.epa.gov/land-research/farm-kitchen-environmental-impacts-us-food-waste](https://www.epa.gov/land-research/farm-kitchen-environmental-impacts-us-food-waste)

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/preventing-wasted-food-home>

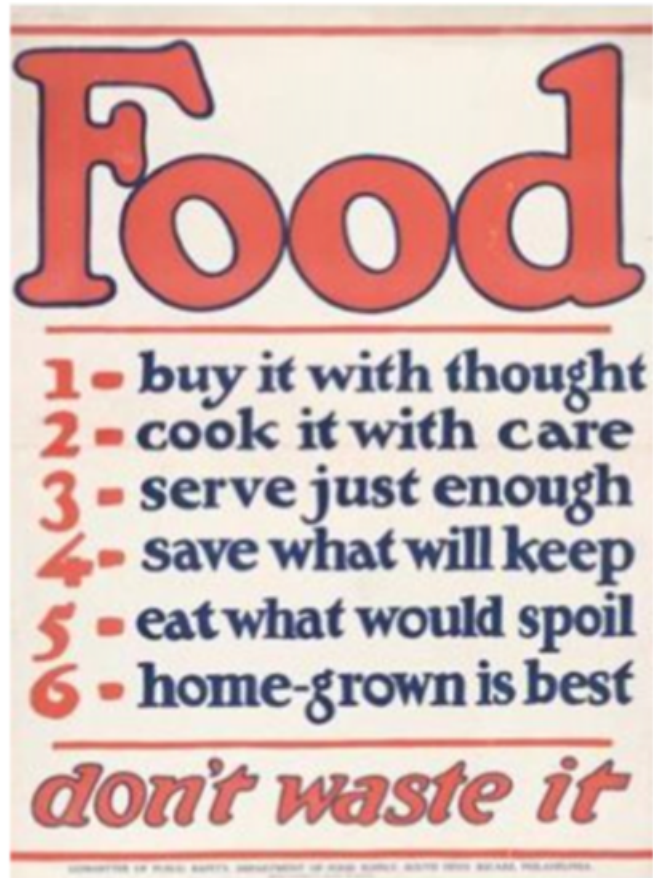
# Surplus Food Occurs Across the Supply Chain



Source: ReFED/2023 Data (Published Nov 2024)



# What can we do?



## Strategies to Reduce Wasted Food

- Smart shopping and planning
- Proper food storage
- Eat Me First!
  - Understanding spoilage, storage and expiration dates
- Creative cooking
  - Batch prep and cooking
  - Learning to cook without recipes
  - Using leftovers

# Pollution reduction during the holidays



Gifts



Re-Use



Decorations



Food



# More Pollution Prevention and Environmental Resources

- Balloon release ban (DWR)
- Marine debris (CZM)
- Clean Virginia Waterways
- Plant Virginia Natives
- EPA Safer Choice label
- EPA EnergyStar program
- EPA WaterSense program





# What can you, your small business, or your community do?



Recycling



Reduce or eliminate single-use plastic



Repair and mend



Purchasing choices



Education



Handling waste



Energy Audit

# Learning Objectives – How did we do?



Understand the importance of pollution prevention



List some of the pollution prevention programs at DEQ



Know how to identify Virginia Green businesses



Find additional pollution prevention resources



Identify at least one action you can take to prevent pollution

# 2025 Education Webinar Series

- [Link to sign up for GovDelivery just for the Education Series](#)
- Register for the whole series, or one by one

2025

## VIRTUAL EDUCATION SERIES

Learn more about DEQ programs & resources



Free & open to the public  
Webinars are recorded & posted online  
Visit [deq.virginia.gov/eduseries](https://deq.virginia.gov/eduseries)

REGISTER NOW



### LANDFILLS 101 | March 11, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Curious about how landfills are built, what happens when they're full, or how they're permitted and inspected? Join our free webinar to learn about DEQ's role in regulating Virginia's landfills.

### CHESAPEAKE BAY | June 10, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

The Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the U.S., is home to diverse plant and animal life but faces water quality challenges. Its watershed spans six states and D.C., making its preservation critical. Virginia plays a key role in its recovery. Join our free webinar to learn about DEQ's efforts to protect and restore the Bay.



### WATER PLANNING | Sep. 9, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Virginia boasts over 100,000 miles of rivers and streams, 1 million acres of wetlands, 240+ public lakes, and 120 miles of coastline. Balancing the demands on these resources—from protecting aquatic life to supporting public use and industry—is essential. Join our free webinar to learn about Virginia's water resources and DEQ's efforts in managing and planning for their sustainable use.



### GRANTS | Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Looking for grants for litter prevention, recycling, water quality monitoring, or watershed projects? DEQ offers funding for these and more. Join our free webinar to learn about available grants in Virginia and how to apply.





# Questions?