

**Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission
Energy Ingenuity Committee Meeting
The Bristol Hotel
115 Country Music Way, Bristol, VA 24201
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
2:30 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Delegate Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., Chair	Mr. Jay D. Jennings
Senator Lashrecse D. Aird, Vice-Chair	Delegate Terry G. Kilgore
Delegate Jed Arnold	Delegate Daniel Marshall, III (Remote)
Mr. H. Wayne Carter	Mr. Arthur “Dale” Moore (Remote)
Ms. Amanda Cox	Delegate James W. Morefield
Mr. Watt R. Foster, Jr.	

Committee Members Absent

Senator T. Travis Hackworth	Delegate Israel D. O’Quinn
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Staff

Honorable James Campos	Ms. Stephanie Kim
Mr. Stephen Versen	Mr. Jerry Silva
Mr. Warren Bryson	Ms. Roz Stein
Mr. Jordan Butler	Ms. Emily Van Pelt
Ms. Sarah Capps	Ms. Sara Williams
Ms. Adrian Chapman	

Counsel for the Commission

Ms. Elizabeth Myers, Assistant Attorney General

Guests

Ms. Karen Jackson, Commonwealth Center for Advanced Logistics Systems (CCALS)
Ms. Kim Benson, IVDA/Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center at San Bernadino Airport, CA

Committee Chair Garrett opened the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

Director Campos called roll and determined that a quorum was present. Per TRRC Electronic Meeting Policy, “for purposes of determining whether a quorum is physically assembled, an individual member who is approved to use remote participation because of a personal disability (or other medical condition)... will count toward the quorum as if the individual was physically present.” Therefore, Commissioner Marshall’s remote participation counts toward the quorum.

Deputy Director Versen read into the record the remote participation policy.

Commissioner Aird moved to approve the remote participation of Commissioners Marshall and Moore; Commissioner Kilgore seconded the motion; all members voted to approve the motion.

Foster moved to approve the minutes from the previous Energy Committee meeting on January 6, 2025 (available online); Commissioner Carter seconded the motion; all members voted to approve the motion.

The meeting was opened to public comment, and there was none.

Campos gave an overview of the necessity and value that the Tobacco Commission's energy funding could have for the regions in the footprint.

Mr. Silva presented the grant requests for project 4378.

Commissioner Kilgore moved that the Energy Committee approve staff's recommendation for the Energy Ingenuity Program as described on pages 79 through 85 of the Board Book and make a grant award of \$1,000,000 to Greensville County for project 4378 contingent on approval of the following by the Commission's Executive Director: Performance agreement between the county and the company; execution of letters of agreement for off-take of the energy and by-products; an approved project budget for the capital costs for the Phase 1 pilot, with evidence of secured financial commitments confirming all financing to complete the project; confirmation of approval of all required permits prior to release of grant funds. Furthermore, I move that the Energy Committee approve staff's recommendation for a referral for a \$740,000 loan from the Commission's Lending Partnership Program, contingent on loan approval by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority; Arnold seconded; all present voted to approve.

Ms. Jackson expressed her appreciation to the Committee and the Commission for the support of CCALS. She believes the Commonwealth has a unique opportunity to invest in two sets of technologies, hydrogen hybrid applications and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) (drones). The two CCALS projects supported by the Commission (4311 and 4322), taken together, will allow Southern Virginia and the tobacco footprint to test new technologies related to UAS/drones, ground vehicles, and other equipment.

Ms. Benson added that the tobacco region can "differentiate itself as an energy industry-centric UAS technology hub." There are opportunities to augment what already exists in the region in three ways: 1. Research and development; 2. Demonstrations, specifically demonstrations using drone technology in the energy sector; and 3. Drone pilot training, specifically regarding testing for drone pilot proficiency skills. She looks forward to seeing how the industry develops in the region.

Jackson added that these technologies will have wider applications beyond the energy industry, such as in agriculture.

Garrett brought up a numerical error for CCALS project 4322, approved in January.

Commissioner Jennings moved that the Energy Committee accept staff's recommendation for a change in the award amount for grant 4322 from \$49,250 to \$49,560; Carter seconded; all present voted to approve.

Aird asked whether the findings from the study associated with project 4322 will be available to the Commission. Silva confirmed that all information will be available to the Commission.

Morefield spoke about the request from the Tazewell County IDA for project 4377, encouraging Tazewell to make an application to the AMLER (Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization) program, the deadline for which is June 18.

Kilgore moved to table project 4377; Morefield seconded; all present voted to approve the motion.

There was no other business.

Garrett adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.