



General Assembly 2018: Some Good News for Arlington

By Rick Keller

In its 2018 session, the Virginia General Assembly passed two pieces of legislation that will deliver significant benefits to Arlington County's government and citizens.

The first is a bill that will enable a test project for school net metering. The idea is that if a school produces more power than it uses, the school district will be able to use that excess power to offset usage at another site. Arlington's Discovery Elementary falls into this category. Designed as a "net-zero" facility it is producing more power than it uses (see [this article](#) in our December 2015 newsletter).



Photo courtesy of VMDO Architects

Currently, this energy just flows into the Dominion grid, basically free energy for the utility. Under this law, Dominion will allow Arlington Public Schools to either use the excess electricity to offset consumption elsewhere in the school system or to be paid for the excess. The State Corporation Commission will set the rules under which this test will operate by December 2018. A report evaluating the test is due in 2020.

The bill was proposed by Delegate Rip Sullivan (House 48th District) and only applies to schools. Discovery is currently the only school in Virginia that meets the criteria.

The second bill that has positive potential for Arlington is HB922 (Delegate Bulova, House 37th District) which was combined with a Senate version. This legislation would allow Arlington to install charging

stations on County property and then meter them for public use. The logistics and value of such an arrangement still needs to be determined, but it does provide localities with the option. EV usage is growing, and this would provide some return on investment and reduce greenhouse gases.

I have my own home 240v connection for my EV, but someone living in a multi-story building may not. Many companies are installing charging stations on their properties, but those are primarily for their employees. A County facility where an EV owner may charge up would provide residents with another vehicle option.

This opportunity dovetails with one of the conditions of the VW settlement (the fine paid by VW for misrepresenting vehicle emissions). That will yield a "Statewide Public Electric Vehicle Charging Station Network" under a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality procurement that is due to be completed in 2018. EV sales in the U.S. will pass a quarter million before the end of April 2018, and the ready availability of additional charging stations should spur even more ownership.

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