

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section relating to rainfall design standards for flood resilience.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding the following section to Chapter 2 of Title 33.2:
-

§ 33.2-XXX. Rainfall design standards for state transportation projects.

A. The Department of Transportation shall incorporate climate-adjusted precipitation values when establishing design standards for stormwater management facilities, culverts, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure.

B. Until NOAA Atlas 15 precipitation frequency estimates are published and formally adopted by the Commonwealth, the Department shall apply an interim adjustment factor of not less than 20 percent (20%) above NOAA Atlas 14 values for all rainfall intensities used in design.

C. The Commissioner of Highways shall update all relevant VDOT design manuals, including the Drainage Manual and the Structure and Bridge Manual, within 12 months of the effective date of this section to reflect these requirements.

D. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a locality or regional transportation authority from applying more conservative rainfall design standards.

2. That this act shall become effective on July 1, 2026.

Why Title 33.2 matters

- It puts the requirement directly in VDOT's lane, which covers bridges, culverts, and drainage tied to transportation projects.
- It makes compliance automatic for Structure & Bridge and Location & Design Divisions, since their manuals flow from statutory mandates.
- It still allows DEQ (Title 62.1) to oversee local stormwater systems, but ensures transportation infrastructure — often the most expensive and most at risk — is upgraded first.