



STATE BUDGET WRITER ALSO W&M'S BEST-PAID ADJUNCT

\$60,000

Annual pay for state Sen. Thomas K. "Tommy" Norment at the College of William and Mary.

Among William and Mary adjuncts making more than \$10,000 per year, the average pay was **\$19,300**. In addition, 155 adjuncts at the school make less than \$10,000. The median pay for adjuncts at the University of Virginia Law School is about **\$6,000**.

Senate Majority Leader Thomas K. "Tommy" Norment is one of the most powerful legislators in the General Assembly. He also teaches courses and advises the president at the College of William and Mary, which is near Norment's district.

BY TRAVIS FAIN
tfain@dailypress.com

RICHMOND — Senate Majority Leader Thomas K. "Tommy" Norment is the highest paid adjunct professor at the College of William and Mary by a wide margin.

An attorney who has been in the Virginia Senate since 1992, Norment also makes more than double what any adjunct professor at the University of Virginia School of Law is paid, pulling in \$60,000 a year in a field that typically pays less than \$10,000.

He makes more than judges who moonlight as professors, more than William and Mary adjuncts who manage campus legal assistance clinics and more

CONFLICT QUESTION:

Norment's dual role was called into question by state Sen. Chap Petersen, D-Fairfax, who was upset that his bill to limit the number of out-of-state students at Virginia universities died in one of Norment's committees. Norment also sponsors spending measures for William and Mary. Norment has cited an opinion from former state Attorney General Bob McDonnell that his position doesn't present a conflict. William and Mary says it also sees no conflict.

than a long list of part-time professors outside the law school who have distinguished resumes in their fields.

The reason, according to the school: Norment's work load, his experience and his dealings with College President Taylor Revelle, whom the powerful legislative leader and co-chairman of the Senate's budget committee advises on university matters.

"It won't be apples to apples to compare an adjunct professor with Sen. Norment," William and Mary spokesman Brian Whitson said.

The Daily Press did so anyway following a debate during this past legislative session as to whether Norment's dual role as a public university professor and

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VA CHOICE PROGRAM ADDING TO WORKLOAD

In Hampton, more manpower needed to process referrals

BY HUGH LESSIG
hlessig@dailypress.com

Three years ago, Congress authorized \$10 billion to provide a community-based shortcut for veterans seeking health care.

Since then, the Hampton VA Medical Center has more than doubled its staff to keep pace with the program. Yet recent government reports indicate the shortcuts aren't happening as intended across the VA system regionally or nationally.

With the program set to expire in August and a new administration in charge, the future of Veterans Choice remains unsettled.

Under Veterans Choice, patients who wait more than 30 days for an appointment at a VA health provider can be referred elsewhere for care. The same goes for veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the nearest VA health center with a full-time doctor.

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WATER PLAN A WIN-WIN?



AILEEN DEVLIN/DAILY PRESS

Water flows through a pipe off West Lewis Road in Hampton on Tuesday. Local governments could get a break on the cost of improvements to drainage and stormwater systems under an HRSD plan.

Pumping treated wastewater into aquifer to boost groundwater could also cut stormwater project fees

BY DAVE RESS
dress@dailypress.com

HAMPTON — The Hampton Roads Sanitation District says it has a deal for the region: a plan to stop discharging treated wastewater into the Chesapeake Bay that could save property owners hundreds of millions of dollars in fees for drainage and stormwater projects.

The idea is already set to give

Hampton property owners a financial break next year, even though the regional authority doesn't expect its plan — which calls for pumping highly treated wastewater into the area's main groundwater aquifer — to be fully ramped up before 2025.

Instead of the 13 percent hike in stormwater fees Hampton had been bracing for next year,

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TAKE A TRIP TO GLOUCESTER

Our 12 Hours series highlighting interesting things to see and do in our area continues.
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COACHING CAROUSEL

In college hoops, it never stops, even when those involved are neck deep in the NCAA tourney.
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Lights from the Abbington at Hampton Center Apartments reflect over water in a drainage ditch that leads into the Lynnhaven Lake in Hampton.

WATER

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to be followed by a 12.5 percent increase for fiscal year 2020, the city now plans to hold steady at \$7.83 a month for residential property for the next few years, city water resources engineer Brian Lewis said.

What makes it possible is a new offer from HRSD to let localities use credits it expects to earn for reducing discharges of pollutants into the area's waterways. It will extend the offer to 10 other Hampton Roads cities and counties in months to come, HRSD general manager Ted Henifin said.

"It should end up saving the community money," he said.

The money

Here's how it's supposed to work:

HRSD estimates the cost of the equipment to treat wastewater to drinking water standards will run about \$1 billion by 2025. Henifin thinks he can fit that into the authority's current \$4 billion, multidecade construction plan with current and already-planned rates by pushing back some projects. He thinks federal and state regulators will agree to the juggling of project timing.

By slashing HRSD emissions, Henifin hopes to clear the way to give local governments a break on the roughly \$1.8 billion cost of improving their drainage and stormwater management facilities to hit tough water quality standards set by federal and state regulators. Hampton's bill will likely be in the \$100 million to \$200 million range to hit its 10 year deadline to cut nitrogen discharges by 5.6 tons a year, phosphorus by 1.2 tons and sediment by 494 tons.

Those standards apply to HRSD and the

localities alike, but existing environmental law allows all of them to trade credits earned by reducing pollutants. The arrangement is similar to the cap and trade system President Ronald Reagan's administration used to phase out leaded gasoline, and that many environmentalists suggest as a way to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The trade-off, using credits already in hand and credits to come when the aquifer injection is underway, could allow localities to adjust the timing of their own stormwater projects, and possibly to accelerate flood control efforts, Henifin said. It could also allow localities to shift their focus from retro-fitting existing facilities to new water quality initiatives, he said.

In Hampton, Lewis isn't planning any major changes for next year. The city's current plans call for it to finish a nearly \$1.7 million project along Indian River creek and the Pochin Place area, a \$365,000 project at Air Power Park and a \$700,000 project involving new ditches, storm drains and other facilities in the Winchester Drive area. It also plans to create new wetlands northeast of the intersection of Buckroe Avenue and Ralph Street and at Thomas Eaton Middle School to absorb stormwater.

But recommending a fee level for stormwater management — and in this case, deciding no increase is needed after all — means looking many, many years into the future. Doing that, Lewis feels comfortable that the HRSD aquifer project will allow savings on stormwater projects down the pike.

The needs

Henifin says his proposal addresses two critical water resources needs.

The first is flows of water carrying heavy loads of dirt, nitrogen and phosphorus.

Rain running off of lawns fertilized with nitrogen and phosphorus into storm drains

and onto city streets, and from there into area waterways can carry huge amounts of all three, as well as such toxic chemicals as the drippings of oil, brake and transmission fluids that cars and trucks leave behind them.

And the phosphorus in detergents and nitrogen from human waste that flow into the region's sewers and then to HRSD's treatment plants, like the runoff from city streets and drains, could feed algae if those chemicals reach the bay. The algae in turn deprive oysters, crabs and fish of the oxygen they need to live. On top of that, dirt washing into the bay blocks sunlight from reaching the plants that shellfish and fin fish eat.

The second issue is the rapidly dropping level of groundwater in the Potomac aquifer.

It's the only source of drinking water for some 21,000 homes and businesses in James City County; it is where Smithfield gets its water, as do tens of thousands of Hampton Roads residents and businesses with private wells.

The aquifer supplies the giant WestRock paper mill in West Point.

It's what the rest of the Peninsula relies on for water in times of drought. And groundwater levels have dropped 200 feet or more over the past century. If they fall much farther — the critical point is a layer of clay that lies about 300 feet below the Peninsula — wells in the region could start running dry.

HRSD's plan to inject about 100 million gallons a day of purified wastewater into the ground by 2025 is roughly the same amount the region is now taking out. That should keep water levels from dropping further. At the same time, it means 100 million fewer gallons a day of wastewater, not currently purified to drinking water standards as Henifin proposes doing, won't carry any-

thing into the bay at all.

"We're watching this very closely," said Bill Hayden, spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Quality. "It has a lot of possibilities."

The complications

In Newport News, director of engineering Everett Skipper is looking forward to a detailed briefing from Henifin.

In addition to the fees city residents pay for stormwater drainage works — which have been rising slowly for the past six years and currently stand at \$11.25 a month for homeowners — the \$1 billion HRSD would need to spend comes from the fees it charges property owners, he said.

Whether and how potential savings on the one side from future credits HRSD can provide the city balance any increases in HRSD fees is one question Skipper wants to look at.

Another big question is about projects HRSD might schedule after the aquifer injection project, he said.

The authority and the localities it serves are under an order from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to deal with overflows from sanitary sewers into storm drains and area waterways during wet weather. HRSD said it would take on projects to address that order.

But if those are delayed, it's not clear whether cities would have to re-assume those costs, Skipper said. And if that happens, fees for sewer service might have to rise.

"We don't disagree that there's likely to be a net overall savings to the region, but we need to figure out how all the pieces fit together," he said.

Press can be reached by phone at 757-247-4535.