

## **Restricting Political Contributions from Public Service Corporations**

### **Background:**

Utilities in Virginia (such as Dominion, Appalachian Power and Virginia Natural Gas) are regulated by the Corporation Commission under laws adopted by the General Assembly. The Commissioners are appointed by the General Assembly. Accordingly, it appears that the regulated utilities are donating money to the extent that they will be assured a favorable regulatory climate to the detriment of the ratepayers and the public interest.

In 2015 alone, Dominion contributed a total of \$665,484, with \$375,984 going to Republicans and \$282,249 going to Democrats, according to the nonpartisan Virginia Public Access Project. Observers, critics, and even legislators agree that Dominion Resources is the single most powerful force in the Virginia General Assembly.

Following lobbying by these utilities, the General Assembly has repeatedly failed to adopt legislation necessary to address climate change.

This year, for the first time, nearly 60 non-incumbent House of Delegates candidates have signed a pledge to never accept contributions from Dominion or Appalachian Power.

**Therefore, be it resolved that,** the 2017 Eighth District Democratic Convention:

1. Calls upon all members of the Virginia General Assembly to reject campaign contributions from a public service corporation;
2. Supports legislation prohibiting any candidate for the General Assembly or statewide office from soliciting or accepting campaign contributions from a public service corporation;
3. Urges Virginia's state and local elected officials to establish the fight against climate change as a top legislative priority in accordance with Virginia's constitutional mandate to "protect [Virginia's] atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction."