

EVAN FEINMAN

*Executive Director, Tobacco Region
Revitalization Commission | Governor's
Chief Broadband Advisor*



Evan Feinman is both the Executive Director of the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and Governor Northam's Chief Broadband Advisor. He was previously Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources, Deputy Policy Director for the Governor McAuliffe's transition team, and the McAuliffe campaign's policy director. Evan has worked on multiple campaigns at the state and federal level, and at the Commonwealth Institute, a budget and fiscal policy think tank in Richmond.

He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia, spent two years on a fellowship focused on energy and transportation policy, and then received his law degree from Washington and Lee University School of Law. A Lynchburg native, Evan currently resides in Richmond with his wife, Annalisa Feinman, an attorney with the Richmond Public Defender's office.

LIZA FLEESON TROSSBACH

Program Manager, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Pesticide Services



Liza Fleeson Trossbach currently serves as the Program Manager for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Office of Pesticide Services. In this position, she directs the statewide pesticide program and administers the Virginia Pesticide Control Act and related regulations.

The program includes applicator certification, business licensing, product registration, enforcement & field operations, compliance, and special projects including pesticides disposal and container recycling.

Liza is also the current President of the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO). Throughout her career, Liza has worked in environmental and public health programs with the Departments of Health, Corrections and Agriculture

SADIE GARY

Director of Legislative Affairs, VMDAEC



Sadie Gary is the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Virginia, Maryland, & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives.

In her position, Sadie lobbies on behalf of Virginia's 13 Electric Cooperatives at the Virginia General Assembly and represents VMDAEC all political and legislative matters. Prior to joining VMDAEC, she served as Chief of Staff to Delegate Chris Hurst and Deputy Director of Scheduling to Governor Terry McAuliffe. Sadie graduated with a B.S. in Sociology from Virginia Tech.

RICHARD GUPTON

Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Counsel Agricultural Retailers Association



Richard Gupton, possessing more than 20 years of public policy experience, serves as ARA's senior vice president of public policy and counsel. Gupton represents the Ag retailers' and distributors' interests before the legislative and executive branches of government, working to ensure that important Ag retail-distribution issues receive fair consideration on Capitol Hill. He also manages ARAPAC, the association's political action committee.

Prior to joining ARA, Gupton served as deputy director of agricultural finance for the Independent Community of Bankers of America (ICBA). Before ICBA, Gupton spent six years on Capitol Hill working in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives as Legislative Counsel, advising members of Congress on a wide range of policy issues such as agriculture, environment, transportation, and energy.

Gupton is a graduate of Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, and holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is licensed to practice law in North Carolina, the District of Columbia, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

BOB HOLSWORTH

Managing Partner, DecideSmart LLC

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Bob is the team lead for higher education and civic engagement projects.

Prior to joining the firm, he was the Founding Director of the Center for Public Policy and the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. He also served as Dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences – the largest unit of the 31,000-student university.

Bob has occupied key positions in a number of major governmental initiatives. He was the Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Efficiency and Effectiveness. He has been the Director of the Virginia Executive Institute and Co-Staff Director of the Commission on the Future of Virginia's Urban Areas, a gubernatorial commission that examined how Virginia's urban areas could become flourishing parts of regional economies.

Bob serves on the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University. He received his BA from Seton Hall University and his PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

JOE LERCH

Director of Local Government Policy, VACo



Joe serves as Director of Local Government Policy for VACo. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in geology from William and Mary and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech. Joe has worked as a planner for the Cities of Fairfax and Richmond, and Spotsylvania County. He also served as a Planning Commissioner for the City of Fredericksburg. His various professional memberships include the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association, The Virginia Rural Planning Caucus and National Association of Counties.

CHRISTY MORTON

Vice President of External Affairs, VEDP



Christy Morton serves as VEDP's Vice President of External Affairs, responsible for managing VEDP's relationships with the General Assembly, the Administration, and Virginia's congressional delegation. She also leads VEDP's external relationships with local and regional economic development organizations, trade associations, and other key stakeholders and partners to increase VEDP's collaboration across the Commonwealth.

Morton previously served for four years as Executive Director of the Virginia Rural Center, where she brought together local and state government officials to develop solutions for challenges facing rural communities. She worked closely with legislators, the Administration, telecommunications firms, CIT, and other groups to improve broadband access in rural areas, as well as led initiatives to highlight innovative opportunities for economic development in rural Virginia.

Morton once served as Deputy Director of External Affairs and Policy Development for Governor Bob McDonnell, building coalitions and managing stakeholder relations for the Governor's initiatives and legislative agenda as well as for all cabinet offices. Before joining the Administration, she worked in communications and public relations for Virginia Natural Gas in Norfolk, Virginia, and in government affairs and public relations with Davis Consultants in Richmond.

BETTINA RING

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry



Governor Ralph S. Northam appointed Bettina Ring in 2018 to serve as the fourth Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In this capacity, she supports the Governor's mission of building a strong Virginia economy in agriculture and forestry, two of Virginia's largest private industries, while also protecting the environment.

Prior to her appointment as Secretary, Ring was appointed by former Governor Terry McAuliffe to serve as the seventh State Forester of the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF).

During her term leading the agency, Ring secured \$27 million in funding for emergency response equipment used to fight forest fires and to assist localities and other state agencies. A Virginia native, Ring began her career with VDOF and held a number of leadership positions, including deputy state forester, during her 18 years with the agency.

Prior to VDOF, Bettina was the senior vice president of family forests at the American Forest Foundation, a position responsible for overseeing the American Tree Farm System – the largest and oldest sustainable woodland program in America. She served on the federal Forest Resource Coordinating Committee, which provides direction within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and with the private sector to effectively address national priorities for private forest management.

US REPRESENTATIVE

ABIGAIL SPANBERGER



U.S. Representative Abigail Spanberger is proud to represent Virginia's Seventh Congressional District, which is comprised of ten counties throughout Central Virginia.

Representative Spanberger began her career in public service, first serving as a federal agent with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service investigating money laundering and narcotics cases, and then serving as a case officer with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As a CIA officer, she worked at home and abroad to collect vital intelligence, keep our country safe, and work in furtherance of our national security priorities. In the private sector, Representative Spanberger worked with colleges and universities to help them diversify their student bodies and increase graduation rates.

Representative Spanberger serves on the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture and the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs. On the House Agriculture Committee, she serves as Chair of the Conservation & Forestry Subcommittee and as a member of the Livestock and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee. And on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Spanberger serves as Vice-Chair of the Europe, Energy, the Environment, & Cyber Subcommittee and as a member of the Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, & Nonproliferation Subcommittee.

Representative Spanberger grew up in Henrico County. She earned her B.A. at the University of Virginia and her MBA at a dual degree program between Purdue University's Krannert School and the GISMA Business School in Hanover, Germany. Representative Spanberger resides in Glen Allen, Henrico County, Virginia with her husband, Adam, and their three children.

US REPRESENTATIVE

ROB WITTMAN



Rob Wittman was first elected to serve the First Congressional District of Virginia - America's First District - in December of 2007. He was re-elected for his sixth full term in the House of Representatives in November 2018. For more than 20 years, Rob has served in several levels of government, from Montross Town Council to United States Congress. Rob won his first campaign for public office in 1986 when he was elected to the Montross Town Council, where he served for 10 years, four of them as Mayor. In 1995, Rob was elected to the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors and was elected its Chairman in 2003. In 2005, voters in the 99th Legislative District elected Rob to the Virginia House of Delegates, where he served until he was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 2007.

In the U.S. Congress, Rob serves on the House Armed Services Committee and the Committee on Natural Resources, where he is well-positioned to represent the needs of Virginia's First District. He has quickly earned a reputation for being an advocate for our men and women in uniform and for being a champion of the Chesapeake Bay.

On the Armed Services Committee, Rob serves as Ranking Member of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee. In addition, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus, he is a staunch advocate for a robust Naval fleet and a healthy domestic shipbuilding industry. Rob served as Chairman of the U.S. Naval Academy's Board of Visitors from 2010 until 2018.

As a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Rob brings his professional expertise in water quality, fisheries, and other natural resource issues. He is a champion of the Chesapeake Bay -- for its environmental and economic attributes -- and has introduced legislation that will increase the accountability and effectiveness of cleaning up the Bay. He serves as co-chair of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Caucus, which brings Bay issues into focus for Members of Congress.

Prior to his election to Congress, Rob spent 26 years working in state government, most recently as Field Director for the Virginia Health Department's Division of Shellfish Sanitation. Earlier, he worked for many years as an environmental health specialist for local health departments in Virginia's Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula regions.

He holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Master of Public Health degree in Health Policy and Administration from the University of North Carolina, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Virginia Tech.

ANDREA WORTZEL

Partner, Troutman Pepper



Andrea Wortzel's practice focuses on water quantity and water quality issues, including water rights, water supply planning, and water withdrawal permitting, as well as discharge permitting and TMDL development and implementation. She coordinates a growing and influential stakeholder group focused on water supply issues in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Beyond her water practice, Andrea advises clients on endangered species issues, landfill permitting and compliance, waste permitting, environmental compliance and audit programs and environmental enforcement defense. Andrea also regularly counsels clients on legislative and regulatory strategies to promote her clients' objectives.