

Chapter 11 *Public Comment Forums*

This chapter contains detailed instructions that are intended for state agency users.

Public comment forums allow anyone to post and view comments. Public comment forums open automatically on the *Register* publication date of any Notice of Periodic Review, Petition for Rulemaking, change to a guidance document, or any stage of a regulatory action (NOIRA, fast-track, proposed or final). In addition, an agency can optionally open a comment forum by using the General Notice feature on the Town Hall.

The comment period defaults to that required by statute or executive order. The length of a public comment forum can be extended under the following circumstances

- For regulatory stages, the length of time is based upon statutory minimum timeframes (see next page). Agencies can allow more time to receive public comments by manually extending the comment end date when submitting the regulatory package to the Registrar’s office. Agencies can also extend a comment period once it is underway, by manually changing the comment end date, after the Registrar’s Office is notified.
- For general notices, agencies can determine the length of the public comment period. Agencies can also extend a comment period once it is underway, by manually changing the comment end date. If the general notice was sent to the Registrar for publication, agencies should extend the date only after the Registrar’s Office is notified.

Public comment forums open at midnight on the day the comment period starts, and last until 11:59 pm on the last day. (For a regulatory stage, the official comment period for a stage begins on the date of publication in the *Register*.) After the comment period has closed, comments can be viewed but new comments cannot be posted.

An individual comment is limited to 3,000 words in length, but an individual may post more than one comment per forum. An editing toolbar allows for simple formatting and the inclusion of “inactive” (non-clickable) links to other websites. Users can post comments either while logged in as a registered public user or as an anonymous user.

Once a public comment is posted, it becomes part of the official record of a regulatory action and cannot be changed.

Browsing for a Comment Forum

The Town Hall [home page](#) has several shortcuts that highlight those public comment forums that are currently active, including those that opened recently.

The [Public Comment Forums page](#) can be accessed by clicking on COMMENT FORUMS on the menu bar. A filter options panel at the top of the page has a variety of search options, including searching by RECENTLY CLOSED forums. You may also search by a particular board or agency by clicking on the MORE FILTER OPTIONS link.

There are also links to related comment forums on other parts of the Town Hall, including the pages for the associated regulatory stage, guidance document, periodic review, or petition for rulemaking.

Viewing Public Comments

Public comment forums that are currently active can be accessed by clicking on COMMENT FORUMS on the menu bar to browse to the [Public Comment Forums page](#). Next, select VIEW AND ENTER COMMENTS beside the desired forum.

Once you enter a forum (past or current) you can see a list of the comments like the example below.

Public Comment Forum

On this Action: [Repeal and Replace Virginia's Radiation Protection Regulations](#)

[NOIRA Stage - View the regulatory documents](#)

In Progress! Opened on [12/15/2025](#) and closes at 11:59pm on [1/14/2026](#)

[More about public comment forums and policies](#)

[Enter a comment](#) [View all comments](#)

1 comments

Comment Title	Commenter	Date
Exemptions	Les Foldesi, MS, CHP Emeritus	12/15/25 1:18 pm

You can click on a comment title to read that particular comment or you can choose the VIEW ALL COMMENTS ON ONE PAGE link to obtain a comprehensive listing of all comments for the forum.

Public Comments on Regulatory Stages

The public has several opportunities to post and view comments on a regulatory action at each stage of the rulemaking process.

- Standard Action:
 - NOIRA stage. Once published in the *Register*, the public comment period lasts for at least 30 days per the Code of Virginia (Code) [§ 2.2-4007.01](#).
 - Proposed stage. Once published in the *Register*, the agency receives public comment for at least 60 days per Code [§ 2.2-4007.03](#).
 - Final stage. Once published in the *Register*, there is a 30-day final adoption period during which many agencies hold a comment forum pursuant to their *Public Participation Guideline*. In addition, Code [§ 2.2-4007.06](#) provides that if any “changes with substantial impact” have been made to the regulation between the proposed and final stages, then “any person may petition the agency within 30 days from the publication of the final regulation” to request that the agency open an additional 30-day comment period.
- Fast-track Action.
 - Once published in the *Register*, the agency receives public comment for at least 30 days per Code [§ 2.2-4012.1](#).
- Emergency or Emergency/NOIRA
 - No public comment period is required following the publication of an emergency regulation.

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- However, an emergency regulation is typically published along with a NOIRA to begin the process of making that emergency regulation permanent. If accompanied by a NOIRA, a 30-day comment period per Code [§ 2.2-4007.01](#) will be held once the stage is published in the *Register*.

Violations of the Town Hall User Policies

Please see our [Public Comment Policy page](#). If you see any objectionable content, please contact DPB.

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