Sponsored by University of Richmond School of Law and the Environmental Law Section of the Virginia State Bar

$1000 prize
Open to all current students at Virginia law schools

PRIZE: The winner will be announced at the end of March and will receive a $1000 prize.

TOPIC: The topic must be about an environmental, energy, or natural resources issue, defined broadly. Past topics have ranged from land use and transportation to the food system and climate change. Choose a topic that is current and that will be of interest to the general public. It should be a topic that a newspaper or website would actually publish now. Within these topic areas, we have found that effective op-eds focus on a relatively narrow issue, tied to something in the news, such as new legislation, a pending proposal, new technology, or an upcoming government or business decision.

ELIGIBILITY: The competition is open to any student currently enrolled in a Virginia law school.

RULES: The op-ed should be written individually. No co-authored work may be submitted. You may not submit writing that has been previously published, in full or in part. However, you are free to modify your own prior work (research papers, briefs etc.) into an op-ed format. Participants should not receive writing assistance of any kind (including proofreading) from any other person prior to submitting the op-ed. You must be able to provide, upon request, a source for any fact in the op-ed. There is no need to provide footnotes in this submission, however. Submissions with unverifiable facts will be disqualified.

FORMAT AND SUBMISSIONS: There is a 750 word limit for the op-ed. Submissions should be Microsoft Word documents, single spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman. Please include a title, which will count toward the final word count. Do not include your name anywhere in the Word Document. Submissions are due on March 16, 2016, 5:00 pm, to Lucy Sprague, lsprague@richmond.edu

RESOURCES: For resources on writing op-eds and sample op-eds from major newspapers, see http://tinyurl.com/q8y4b9m http://tinyurl.com/7hd5mus

NO PROMISE OF PUBLICATION: All participants are encouraged to submit their pieces for publication in newspapers, magazines, websites, and blogs. The competition sponsors do not publish the entries or provide assistance in publication, however.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Judging criteria will include persuasiveness of your argument, impact of your opening and closing paragraphs, overall quality of writing, and contribution to an ongoing debate. Submissions will be kept anonymous, and judging will be conducted by a panel that will include faculty from the University of Richmond School of Law and environmental lawyers from the Virginia State Bar.

QUESTIONS: Contact Professor Noah Sachs, University of Richmond, nsachs@richmond.edu

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