



## Who Is The Country's First Chief Energy Officer?



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Democratic Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger appointed an environmental law attorney to be her state's first Chief Energy Officer on Wednesday.

Spanberger signed an executive order to create a new cabinet-level position in the Office of the Virginia Governor. The governor nominated Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) attorney Josephus Allmond for the role, [according](#) to a press release from the Virginia Governor's Office.

Allmond previously served as co-chair on Spanberger's energy transition team. He will cooperate with state government organizations to advise on energy policies aligned with the governor's agenda, according to the press release.

Allmond said he "strongly felt that climate change is the most pressing issue for our generation" during his undergraduate studies, [according](#) to his profile on the SELC website.

The SELC attorney is a long time opponent of fossil fuels. Allmond [co-authored](#) a paper for the Virginia Conservation Network stating that "wind and solar must comprise 60-80% of the nation's electricity mix by 2035" to achieve a carbon-free electrical grid consistent with U.S. climate goals.

Allmond advocated for the Virginia Clean Economy Act which aims for a 100% carbon-free electrical grid by 2050. Allmond emphasized that the transfer from fossil fuels to clean energy needs to be gradual, [according](#) to a February interview with Axios.

SELC received prominent donations from organizations tied to billionaire Fred Stanback. Stanback frequently donates to groups supporting environmental causes, anti-immigration policy, abortion, and population control, [according](#) to The Washington Free Beacon.

SELC received \$175.4 million from the Foundation for the Carolinas, where Stanback is one of the largest account holders, between 2001 and 2017. Stanback has been credited with giving at least \$50 million in donations to the SELC. Stanback and his family controlled 3 out of 11 seats on the SELC's President's Council, [according](#) to reporting from the Capital Research Center.

The SELC received \$4.5 million from the Energy Foundation between 2007 to 2014, [according](#) to InfluenceWatch. The Energy Foundation is an environmental advocacy group with [ties](#) to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

SELC notably supported legislation and filed lawsuits aimed at damaging or otherwise curtailing the coal industry. SELC successfully shuttered three Duke Energy coal units in a 2000 lawsuit pursued on behalf of an environmentalist consortium, [according](#) to the law center's own 2015 press release.

The SELC sued the Trump administration for cutting \$5 billion in funding for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Formula program, which would have built electric vehicle

charging stations every 50 miles on major roads in all U.S. states, [according](#) to an SELC press release.

When President Donald Trump announced reforms to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in January 2025, the SELC responded by hiring more lawyers to grow their operations because “meeting this historic moment would require more legal muscle,” [according](#) to an SELC press release.

The SELC opposed the Trump administration’s \$2.4 billion budget cuts to the Department of Transportation.

“President Donald Trump’s promises to substantially increase infrastructure funding,” according to an SELC statement. “SELC will be reminding those decision makers, and their constituents, about how much is at stake in these budget decisions.”

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