



October 7, 2024

Honorable Mayor Bobby Dyer  
Members of Virginia Beach City Council  
2401 Courthouse Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Subject: Something in the Water Festival

Dear Mayor Dyer and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the board of directors of the Virginia Beach Hotel Association we are reaching out today to express concerns regarding the recent cancellation and future of the Something in the Water Festival.

VBHA fully supports and understands the importance of the Something in the Water Festival and hope this event will become an annual event on the same dates annually. We hope for a more transparent engagement with the city, SITW, and the VBHA moving forward.

We understand the city is working on a 3-year plan for the event and it will be available in December of this year. It is the hope of VBHA that the work and recommendations of the 90-day task force will be considered and utilized in the process.

A few items of concern from the past to consider moving forward:

- Dates of the event not being released well in advance.
- Line-ups not being announced in advance. Especially with the last-minute cancellation this year, we are sure future attendees will be skeptical.
- The lack of a multi-year agreement causes many issues with hotels as well. If we knew in advance when the festival will take place, we can be better partners.
- The late cancellation of this year's event caused many hotels to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many hotels had been holding very large blocks and meeting spaces for the Something in the Water crews and staff.
- Concern for the ill will that was created for the Columbus Day Soccer event that has been taking place in Virginia Beach for over 30 years is being massaged. Many teams were concerned about traffic and congestion moved their team from the oceanfront to hotels in Chesapeake and Norfolk.

We continue to be extremely grateful to you for all the efforts of support to the city and the hospitality industry.

Please reach out with any questions and concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Zirkle", written over a white background.

John Zirkle  
President, VBHA