



Position Title: Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative (VCRC) Legal Extern

Position Summary: The Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative is seeking motivated law students for Spring 2026 externships and research opportunities. The VCRC is a university-wide, interdisciplinary collaborative at William & Mary whose goal is to produce the science and research translation and policy analyses necessary for stakeholders, leaders, and decision-makers tasked with developing and maintaining resilient coastal ecosystems and communities in Virginia and beyond.

The VCRC Spring 2026 Legal Externs will partner with the Director and Assistant Director to support projects through research and practical application of legal research skills. The potential topics Legal Externs may engage with are as broad as “resilience” and the VCRC’s mission to “support a vision of dynamic, safe, healthy, and resilient Virginia communities by collaborating with community, academic, and government partners across the Commonwealth and beyond to promote and enable scientifically informed, participatory decision-making for resilience.”

Duties may include but are not limited to:

- Contribute to legal and policy analyses on a broad range of topics related to resilience, coastal areas, and environmental issues of interest to VCRC partners.
- Support the Director and Assistant Director in organizing and implementing program initiatives including legal and policy research projects, programming, conferences, networking events, and outreach.
- Attend field trips, when possible, that relate to current externship projects.
- Engage in meetings with VCRC clients, researchers, and others as part of projects.
- Present legal research findings to VCRC clients and collaborators.

Required Qualifications:

- 2L or 3L.
- Some knowledge of environmental, energy, and natural resource law and policy.
- Superior academic writing, research, and organizational skills.
- Demonstration of excellent interpersonal skills.
- Good organizational skills, including evidence of strong prioritization skills, accuracy, and attention to detail.
- Discretion in management of information.
- Ability to work independently as well as within a team environment.
- Proficiency in MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, and MS Teams.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Interest in exploring resilience / disaster / environmental legal and policy research relevant to under-resourced communities in coastal communities.
- Past or present law classes focused on administrative, environmental, regulatory, marine, community planning, and energy law.
- Basic knowledge of land use planning and other relevant topics, such as water-quality protection, wetlands protection, stormwater management, flooding, energy, or the Chesapeake Bay Protection Act.
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for pursuing a career in the areas of flooding/floodplain management, disaster response/policy, natural resource management, environmental protection, resilience policy/studies, or public policy/law of marine and/or coastal environments.

Additional information: VCRC Director [Thomas Ruppert](#) ([Google Scholar profile](#)) is a lawyer with 20 years of experience in coastal- and marine-related issues, particularly legal issues related to sea-level rise and coastal adaptation. Mr. Ruppert has supervised students remote legal externs from at least seven different law schools and had current/former students as co-authors or contributors on several publications.

Anticipated credits: 3 (120 hours)

Required Documents:

1. Resume/Curriculum Vitae
2. Cover Letter
3. Unofficial undergraduate and graduate/law school transcripts

Application Deadline:

December 10, 2025

How to Apply: Send required application materials to:

1. Thomas Ruppert, Esq., VCRC Director: tkruppert@wm.edu
2. Cameron Bruce, M.P.P., VCRC Assistant Director: csbruce@wm.edu