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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 76

Offered January 17, 2000

Continuing the Commission on the Future of Virginia's Environment.

Patron—Bolling

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the 1996 Session of the General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 221, creating a study to examine the history of environmental and natural resources programs and funding for such programs in the Commonwealth and to develop a long-term vision and plan for the future management of Virginia's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the 1998 Session of the General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 136 and the 1999 Session of the General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 719 continuing the study on the Future of Virginia's Environment; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has formed subcommittees on parks and land conservation, solid waste, the Water Quality Improvement Act, and the vision and plan for the future of Virginia's environment, each of which has met frequently and accomplished a great deal; and

WHEREAS, throughout the Commission's existence, it has been on the forefront of environmental issues coming before the General Assembly, including solid waste issues, the Water Quality Improvement Act, and land conservation issues; and

WHEREAS, due to a continuing desire to monitor the implementation of the Commission's numerous recommendations and a recognition of the role the Commission has established for itself as a body of experts on emerging environmental issues, the Commission members agree that the Commission should continue for an additional year; and

WHEREAS, Maryland's attempt to eliminate disincentives for rational development through its Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiatives has captured the attention of many Virginians, as evidenced by the number of study resolutions that have been introduced on the subject of smart growth and other closely related subjects, such as Senate Joint Resolution 177 (1998), House Joint Resolution 195 (1998), House Joint Resolution 543 (1999), Senate Joint Resolution 53 (1998), and House Joint Resolution 719 (1999); and

WHEREAS, as a result of these resolutions, members of the General Assembly have learned about many of the problems associated with land-consumptive patterns of development that are known collectively as suburban sprawl, including the declining health of central cities, increasing costs for public services, loss of rural landscapes, and environmental degradation; and

WHEREAS, while many have acknowledged that many land use decisions leading to sprawl are made at the local level, no study committee has devoted a significant amount of time to examining the question of how decision-making at the state level can be made in a way to encourage reinvestment in existing communities, as is done in Maryland under the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiatives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commission on the Future of Virginia's Environment be continued. The Commission shall be composed of those members appointed under HJR 221 (1996) and HJR 136 (1998), provided that members who attended less than two Commission or subcommittee meetings during the 1999 interim may be replaced by the appropriate appointing authority.

In conducting its study, the Commission shall continue to monitor the implementation of its recommendations and create opportunities for the members of the Commission to become educated on environmental issues that may require legislative action. The Commission shall also make recommendations on whether any of the five components of Maryland's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiatives can be employed effectively in Virginia, given those aspects of Commonwealth that differ from Maryland, including the existence of independent cities and Virginia's method of funding local infrastructure needs. The Commission shall recommend legislation designed to ensure that state spending on economic development, infrastructure and transportation discourages sprawl and encourages redevelopment of central cities and the protection of the Commonwealth's rural landscapes.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$14,250.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the

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60 Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division
61 of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.
62 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
63 Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the
64 study.