

2002 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 255

Offered January 18, 2002

Expressing the sense of the General Assembly regarding land conservation.

Patrons—Bryant, Abbitt, Albo, Cox, Dillard, Morgan, Pollard and Thomas

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

WHEREAS, Article XI, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia states "...it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia"; and

WHEREAS, conservation of open space is an important public policy priority of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, many agencies of the Commonwealth play an important and vital role in carrying out this constitutionally-required protection of our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Natural Resources is responsible for the Commonwealth's conservation and environmental regulatory agencies; and

WHEREAS, these agencies have vital responsibilities for the well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth ranging from the protection and enhancement of the air we breathe, and the water we drink, to the maintenance of our parks and the conservation of open space; and

WHEREAS, current funding for the agencies within the Natural Resources Secretariat comprise less than one percent of the state budget; and

WHEREAS, a Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission study found that the Commonwealth of Virginia ranks 50th among states in obtaining federal grant funding; and

WHEREAS, private and non-profit organizations have played an active role in conservation and natural resources management within the Commonwealth, creating great potential for public-private partnerships; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal constraints facing the Commonwealth require innovative approaches to funding conservation initiatives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Secretary of Natural Resources is hereby requested to examine options for providing a stable source of funding for conservation of open space including options for additional grant support and public-private partnerships, and other issues as may seem appropriate; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Natural Resources so that he may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

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