

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 588

*Requesting the Department of Fire Programs, with the assistance of the Department of Emergency Management and the Department of Housing and Community Development, to study the feasibility of adopting requirements within the Commonwealth to ensure that buildings are constructed and equipped in such a way that will permit emergency public safety personnel to utilize effective and reliable radio communications while they are within buildings. Report.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 30, 2003

Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 2003

WHEREAS, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, law-enforcement officers, and other emergency public safety personnel routinely are called upon to provide emergency assistance to members of the public in a wide variety of emergency situations, including, but not limited to, fires, medical emergencies, violent crimes, and terrorist attacks; and

WHEREAS, responding to these emergencies frequently requires those emergency public safety personnel to enter offices, commercial facilities, apartments, condominiums, and other buildings under the most exigent and dangerous circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the lives of those emergency public safety personnel who respond to such emergencies, as well as the lives of those persons who may be within a building in which an emergency occurs, frequently depend solely upon the ability of those public safety personnel to communicate by radio transmissions with others who are within such buildings and others who are outside such buildings; and

WHEREAS, reliable emergency public radio transmissions between those who are within buildings and to others outside of buildings have been a significant and continuing problem for emergency public safety personnel; and

WHEREAS, modern construction materials and techniques often make it more difficult for emergency public safety personnel to communicate with other persons within buildings and with other persons outside of buildings because those materials and techniques sometimes block or impede the transmission of radio signals; and

WHEREAS, technology is available in the form of antennas and signal booster devices, which can be used to provide improved and reliable radio communications in buildings for emergency public safety personnel; and

WHEREAS, a number of jurisdictions elsewhere in the United States have enacted laws requiring developers and building owners to install and use antennas and signal booster devices to facilitate reliable radio communication by emergency public service personnel; and

WHEREAS, it is essential for the members of the public and for those emergency public service personnel who are required to enter into buildings during emergencies that the Commonwealth provide a means to ensure effective and reliable in-building radio communications; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Fire Programs, with the assistance of the Department of Emergency Management and the Department of Housing and Community Development, be requested to study the feasibility of adopting requirements within the Commonwealth to ensure that buildings are constructed and equipped in such a way that will permit emergency public safety personnel to utilize effective and reliable radio communications while they are within buildings.

In conducting this study, the Department of Fire Programs shall consult with and consider the views and comments from representatives of the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and organizations representing builders and owners of apartments, condominiums, factories, and retail and commercial office buildings.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Fire Programs upon request.

The Department of Fire Programs shall complete its work by November 30, 2003, and shall submit an executive summary and report of its written findings and recommendations for publication as a document to the Governor and the 2004 Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2004 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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