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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 381
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules
on February 3, 2003)

(Patrons Prior to Substitute—Senators Hawkins and Norment [SJR 352])

Requesting the Virginia Water Resources Research Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to study desalinization as part of a strategy to meet the Commonwealth's drinking water needs. Report.

WHEREAS, water has become a precious commodity; and

WHEREAS, the increasing demand for water and the threat of drought have citizens and public officials concerned whether there will be a safe, reliable, and available supply of drinking water in the near future; and

WHEREAS, in response to the summer drought of 2002, Virginia's localities and citizens adopted water conservation measures to ensure that an adequate supply of water will be available to meet their most basic needs; and

WHEREAS, measures to reduce the demand for water will not be sufficient to meet the water supply needs of an ever-increasing population and future development, particularly in those localities in the eastern and southeastern regions of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the development of alternative technologies that increase the quantity of drinking water represent an option that should be considered; and

WHEREAS, desalinization, previously considered to be too expensive and impractical, may now be a realistic option; and

WHEREAS, desalinization, a process whereby dissolved salts are separated from water, is common in other parts of the world, particularly the Middle East, where Israel and Saudi Arabia have built plants to provide much of their drinking water; and

WHEREAS, worldwide, more than 13,500 desalinization plants are operating; and

WHEREAS, in Tampa, Florida, the nation's first major plant opened January 2003, producing 25 million gallons of drinking water a day, 10 percent of a 3-county area's needs; and

WHEREAS, some experts think desalinization costs will continue to decrease as technology improves and engineers gain experience; and

WHEREAS, while desalinization is not the solution to the Commonwealth's water supply problems, it does represent an approach that should be considered as a part of any strategy to ensure an adequate drinking water supply; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Water Resources Research Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University be requested to study desalinization as part of a strategy to meet the Commonwealth's drinking water needs.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Water Resources Research Center shall study the costs and benefits of desalinization and whether such technology is cost-effective for those localities located near brackish or ocean water.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Water Resources Research Center for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Water Resources Research Center shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2003, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a document. 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.