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SENATE BILL NO. 893

Offered January 12, 2005

Prefiled January 11, 2005

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-2238.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Economic Development Partnership; economic development services in distressed areas.

Patrons—Hawkins and Ruff

Referred to Committee on Local Government

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 2.2-2238.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 2.2-2238.1. Special economic development services in distressed communities; assignment of staff.
 A. In order to assist the ~~rural~~ *economically distressed* communities of the Commonwealth as defined in § 58.1-439, the Authority shall develop a program for reviewing existing economic development programs of ~~rural~~ *economically distressed* communities, upon request. The program shall include (i) a review and evaluation of existing industrial sites and infrastructure, including existing streets, water and sewer systems, electricity, natural gas and communications facilities; (ii) an assessment of the existing workforce and the provision of information on state and federal programs such as tax incentives that may be available to local or prospective employers to assist in hiring and training in areas of high unemployment; (iii) assistance in identifying community resources and the type of industries that may benefit from locating in a community with such resources; and (iv) marketing assistance to help ~~rural~~ *economically distressed* communities improve their visibility to expanding industries looking for new facilities.

B. The Authority shall designate six of its employees to specialize in the economic development of distressed communities who shall be based in offices located in identified economically distressed communities. Such persons shall be assigned as follows: (i) one for planning districts 1 and 2; (ii) one for planning districts 3, 4, and 5; (iii) one for planning districts 11, 12, and 13; (iv) one for planning districts 17, 18, and 22; (v) one employee serving urban distressed areas in a city within planning district 19; and (vi) one employee serving urban distressed areas in a city within planning district 23. All employees shall be centrally located, to the extent practicable, within the areas served.

2. That the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority shall make every reasonable effort to base the employees designated by subsection B of § 2.2-2238.1 in current planning district offices or facilities of an institution of the Virginia Community College System.

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SB893