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HOUSE BILL NO. 710

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 10, 2006

A BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-906 of the Code of Virginia, relating to a locality's power to secure buildings posing a significant threat to public safety.

Patrons—Ware, O. and Fralin

Referred to Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 15.2-906 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 15.2-906. Authority to require removal, repair, etc., of buildings and other structures.

Any locality may, by ordinance, provide that:

1. The owners of property therein, shall at such time or times as the governing body may prescribe, remove, repair or secure any building, wall or any other structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of such locality;

2. The locality through its own agents or employees may remove, repair or secure any building, wall or any other structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of such locality, if the owner and lien holder of such property after reasonable notice and a reasonable time to do so, has failed to remove, repair or secure the building, wall or other structure. For purposes of this section, repair may include maintenance work to the exterior of a building to prevent deterioration of the building or adjacent buildings. For purposes of this section, reasonable notice includes a written notice (i) mailed by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, sent to the last known address of the property owner and (ii) published once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the locality. No action shall be taken by the locality to remove, repair or secure any building, wall or other structure for at least 30 days following the later of the return of the receipt or newspaper publication, *except that the locality may take action to secure the building within seven days of such notice if the structure is deemed to pose a significant threat to public safety;*

3. In the event the locality, through its own agents or employees, removes, repairs or secures any building, wall or any other structure after complying with the notice provisions of this section, the cost or expenses thereof shall be chargeable to and paid by the owners of such property and may be collected by the locality as taxes are collected;

4. Every charge authorized by this section or § 15.2-900 with which the owner of any such property has been assessed and which remains unpaid shall constitute a lien against such property ranking on a parity with liens for unpaid local taxes and enforceable in the same manner as provided in Articles 3 (§ 58.1-3940 et seq.) and 4 (§ 58.1-3965 et seq.) of Chapter 39 of Title 58.1. A locality may waive such liens in order to facilitate the sale of the property. Such liens may be waived only as to a purchaser who is unrelated by blood or marriage to the owner and who has no business association with the owner. All such liens shall remain a personal obligation of the owner of the property at the time the liens were imposed;

5. A locality may prescribe civil penalties, not to exceed a total of \$1,000, for violations of any ordinance adopted pursuant to this section.

INTRODUCED

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