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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 117

Offered January 11, 2006

Prefiled January 11, 2006

Directing the Coal and Energy Commission to study ways to promote the use of alternative fuels in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Amundson

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the spike in the price of gasoline in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita exposed the vulnerability of the Commonwealth's citizens to reliance on petroleum-based fuels; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Coal and Energy Research at Virginia Tech, less than one-tenth of one percent of the petroleum consumed in the Commonwealth is from Virginia wells; and

WHEREAS, petroleum-based fuels support more than one-third of Virginia's energy consumption, which is a larger proportion than any other primary fuel; and

WHEREAS, most of Virginia's petroleum consumption is in the form of transportation fuels, such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and aviation fuel; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's consumption of gasoline in 2001, according to a 2001 study by the United States Energy Information Administration, ranked 12th among all states at 10.4 million gallons per day (2001); and

WHEREAS, today only 35 percent of the crude oil used in U.S. refineries comes from domestic wells; and

WHEREAS, greater reliance on alternatives to petroleum-based fuels would reduce the Commonwealth's vulnerability to the volatility of world oil markets while offering the opportunity for environmental benefits and lucrative markets for Virginia's agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS, the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 established a renewable fuels standard that sets a national minimum renewable fuel usage requirement of 4 billion gallons in 2006 and increases to 7.5 billion gallons in 2012; and

WHEREAS, biodiesel and ethanol present an opportunity to diversify the supply of fuel for motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Virginia BioDiesel, based in West Point, utilizes Virginia soybean oil to produce a clean-burning fuel, while other biodiesel refiners are making fuel from waste products like recycled cooking grease; and

WHEREAS, biodiesel burns more completely and produces less air pollution than gasoline or regular diesel; reduces engine wear; and produces almost no sulfur emissions; and

WHEREAS, between 1999 and 2004, the amount of biodiesel sold nationwide increased from 500,000 gallons to 30 million gallons, and more than 500 operators of major vehicle fleets, including the Department of Defense, the National Park Service, James Madison University, and Arlington County have converted to biodiesel; and

WHEREAS, ethanol from corn can be mixed with gasoline to produce a clean, efficient fuel that in low concentrations can be used in any vehicle and can fuel vehicles with minor modifications at a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline; and

WHEREAS, a study by Oak Ridge National Laboratory projected that biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel, could provide about a fifth of America's transportation fuel within 25 years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Coal and Energy Commission be directed to study ways to promote the use of alternative fuels in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Coal and Energy Commission shall recommend actions to encourage citizens of the Commonwealth to increase their consumption of biodiesel and ethanol as alternatives to petroleum-based motor fuels.

The Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates shall provide administrative staff support. The Division of Legislative Services shall provide legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Coal and Energy Commission. Technical assistance shall be provided to the Coal and Energy Commission by the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Coal and Energy Commission for this study, upon request.

The Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2006, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and

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59 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2007 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
60 executive summary shall state whether the Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and
61 the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate
62 document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the
63 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and
64 shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.