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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 630

Offered January 10, 2007

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Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the feasibility of creating and implementing an equitable system for charging highway user fees. Report.

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Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, manufacturers are rapidly developing new types of vehicles that use alternative fuel technologies; and

WHEREAS, these new alternatively powered vehicles will not generate revenue from the gas tax for the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, an increase in the gas tax would not be the most fair and effective way for the Commonwealth to raise money for construction and maintenance of its transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, in light of these changes in alternative fuel technology, the assumptions that led to the tax changes passed by the 1986 Special Session of the General Assembly do not reflect the future fuel needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in determining a new, more equitable source of revenue, drivers in the future may be charged highway user fees in order to maintain the highways in the Commonwealth and allow for construction of any new ones; and

WHEREAS, because each person's travel needs and habits are unique, congestion pricing is an option for creating revenue that should be carefully studied; and

WHEREAS, vehicle class and its effect on the environment should also be considered in determining equity among drivers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the feasibility of creating and implementing an equitable system for charging highway user fees. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 13 members that shall consist of 10 legislative members, two nonlegislative citizen members, and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: six members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; one nonlegislative citizen member, who shall have knowledge of highway systems or transportation planning, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one nonlegislative citizen member, who shall have knowledge of highway systems or transportation planning, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Commissioner of the Department of Transportation or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall be reimbursed only for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall study the feasibility of creating and implementing a fair and equitable user fee structure to finance the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure, taxing options for alternative fuel, different methods of calculation and implementation of congestion pricing, and the various effects of different classes of vehicles on highways and the environment. The joint subcommittee shall also examine the assumptions made and the criteria used as the basis for raising the gasoline tax in the 1986 Special Session of the General Assembly.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Transportation. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2007 interim and four meetings for the 2008 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$10,800 for each year without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember related expenses shall

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59 require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a
60 companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall
61 be required.

62 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members
63 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
64 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
65 joint subcommittee.

66 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2007, and for
67 the second year by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative
68 Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first
69 day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall
70 state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a
71 report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The
72 executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of
73 Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be
74 posted on the General Assembly's website.

75 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
76 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
77 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2007 or 2008
78 interim.