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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 681

Offered January 10, 2007

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Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the risks and opportunities created in the Commonwealth as a result of the changing climate. Report.

Patrons—Ebbin, Amundson, Brink, Bulova, Caputo, Englin, Hall, Marsden, McEachin, Moran, Plum, Poisson, Scott, J.M., Shannon, Sickles, Spruill, Tyler, Valentine and Ware, O.

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the vast majority of scientists agree that the climate of the earth is changing and, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the evidence suggests a human influence of the global climate; and

WHEREAS, climate change is an impending crisis with attributable deaths doubling in 25 years—to 300,000 people a year, according to the World Health Organization—and global sea levels rising by more than 20 feet due to the loss of shelf ice in Greenland and Antarctica; and

WHEREAS, higher sea levels create a greater risk of flooding to land and property, rising insurance costs, contamination of fresh water supplies, and the loss of critical wetland habitats, such as those areas adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of regulatory action at the federal level, the private sector, state and local governments, and regional groups throughout the United States have voluntarily taken action to address climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth and industry located in the Commonwealth can reduce its exposure to future regulatory risks by voluntarily adopting climate-sensitive practices; and

WHEREAS, the shift of commercial and personal norms in response to climate change provides an opportunity for industry and agriculture, such as the farming of feedstocks for alternative fuels and the further development of clean coal technologies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the risks and opportunities created in the Commonwealth as a result of the changing climate. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 14 members that shall consist of six legislative members, five nonlegislative citizen members, and three ex officio nonvoting members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four 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; two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; three nonlegislative citizen members with expertise in the disciplines of science, economics, and regulatory policy to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and two nonlegislative citizen members with expertise in the disciplines of science, economics, and regulatory policy to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Secretaries of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Forestry, and Commerce and Trade or their designees shall serve ex officio with nonvoting 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 only be reimbursed 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:

1. Examine steps the public sector can take to minimize harmful impacts on the environment, such as green building practices and forest preservation;

2. Identify business opportunities for Virginia industry arising in various economic sectors that benefit from the efforts to mitigate the harm from climate change, such as alternative fuel technology and feedstocks;

3. Review the costs and benefits of possible regulatory schemes, such as market-based and command control initiatives; and

4. Suggest ways that the Commonwealth can act now to reduce the future cost of such regulation and explore the value of participating in a nonnational regulatory scheme.

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

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58 provided by the Division of Legislative Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide
59 assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

60 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2007 interim and four meetings for
61 the 2008 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,000 for each year without
62 approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require
63 the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a
64 companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall
65 be required.

66 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members
67 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
68 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
69 joint subcommittee.

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

79 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
80 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
81 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings.