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SENATE BILL NO. 1412

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Counties, Cities, and Towns
on February 16, 2007)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Cuccinelli)

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-2286 of the Code of Virginia, relating to authority of a zoning administrator.***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 15.2-2286 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 15.2-2286. Permitted provisions in zoning ordinances; amendments; applicant to pay delinquent taxes.

A. A zoning ordinance may include, among other things, reasonable regulations and provisions as to any or all of the following matters:

1. For variances or special exceptions, as defined in § 15.2-2201, to the general regulations in any district.

2. For the temporary application of the ordinance to any property coming into the territorial jurisdiction of the governing body by annexation or otherwise, subsequent to the adoption of the zoning ordinance, and pending the orderly amendment of the ordinance.

3. For the granting of special exceptions under suitable regulations and safeguards; notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, the governing body of any locality may reserve unto itself the right to issue such special exceptions. Conditions imposed in connection with residential special use permits, wherein the applicant proposes affordable housing, shall be consistent with the objective of providing affordable housing. When imposing conditions on residential projects specifying materials and methods of construction or specific design features, the approving body shall consider the impact of the conditions upon the affordability of housing.

The governing body or the board of zoning appeals of the City of Norfolk may impose a condition upon any special exception relating to retail alcoholic beverage control licensees which provides that such special exception will automatically expire upon a change of ownership of the property, a change in possession, a change in the operation or management of a facility or upon the passage of a specific period of time.

The governing body of the City of Richmond may impose a condition upon any special use permit issued after July 1, 2000, relating to retail alcoholic beverage licensees which provides that such special use permit shall be subject to an automatic review by the governing body upon a change in possession, a change in the owner of the business, or a transfer of majority control of the business entity. Upon review by the governing body, it may either amend or revoke the special use permit after notice and a public hearing as required by § 15.2-2206.

4. For the administration and enforcement of the ordinance including the appointment or designation of a zoning administrator who may also hold another office in the locality. The zoning administrator shall have all necessary authority on behalf of the governing body to administer and enforce the zoning ordinance. His authority shall include (i) ordering in writing the remedying of any condition found in violation of the ordinance; (ii) insuring compliance with the ordinance, bringing legal action, including injunction, abatement, or other appropriate action or proceeding subject to appeal pursuant to § 15.2-2311; and (iii) in specific cases, making findings of fact and, with concurrence of the attorney for the governing body, conclusions of law regarding determinations of rights accruing under § 15.2-2307.

Whenever the zoning administrator of a locality within Planning District 8 has reasonable cause to believe that any person has engaged in or is engaging in any violation of a zoning ordinance that limits occupancy in a residential dwelling unit, which is subject to a civil penalty that may be imposed in accordance with the provisions of § 15.2-2209, and the zoning administrator, after a good faith effort to obtain the data or information necessary to determine whether a violation has occurred, has been unable to obtain such information, he may request that the attorney for the locality petition the judge of the general district court for his jurisdiction for a subpoena duces tecum against any such person refusing to produce such data or information. The judge of the court, upon good cause shown, may cause the subpoena to be issued. Any person failing to comply with such subpoena shall be subject to punishment for contempt by the court issuing the subpoena. Any person so subpoenaed may apply to the judge who issued the subpoena to quash it.

Notwithstanding the provisions of § 15.2-2311, a zoning ordinance may prescribe an appeal period of less than 30 days, but not less than 10 days, for a notice of violation involving temporary or seasonal commercial uses, parking of commercial trucks in residential zoning districts, or similar short-term, recurring violations.

60 Where provided by ordinance, the zoning administrator may be authorized to grant a modification
61 from any provision contained in the zoning ordinance with respect to physical requirements on a lot or
62 parcel of land, including but not limited to size, height, location or features of or related to any building,
63 structure, or improvements, if the administrator finds in writing that: (i) the strict application of the
64 ordinance would produce undue hardship; (ii) such hardship is not shared generally by other properties
65 in the same zoning district and the same vicinity; and (iii) the authorization of the modification will not
66 be of substantial detriment to adjacent property and the character of the zoning district will not be
67 changed by the granting of the modification. Prior to the granting of a modification, the zoning
68 administrator shall give, or require the applicant to give, all adjoining property owners written notice of
69 the request for modification, and an opportunity to respond to the request within 21 days of the date of
70 the notice. The zoning administrator shall make a decision on the application for modification and issue
71 a written decision with a copy provided to the applicant and any adjoining landowner who responded in
72 writing to the notice sent pursuant to this paragraph. The decision of the zoning administrator shall
73 constitute a decision within the purview of § 15.2-2311, and may be appealed to the board of zoning
74 appeals as provided by that section. Decisions of the board of zoning appeals may be appealed to the
75 circuit court as provided by § 15.2-2314.

76 The zoning administrator shall respond within 90 days of a request for a decision or determination
77 on zoning matters within the scope of his authority unless the requester has agreed to a longer period.

78 5. For the imposition of penalties upon conviction of any violation of the zoning ordinance. Any
79 such violation shall be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$1,000.
80 If the violation is uncorrected at the time of the conviction, the court shall order the violator to abate or
81 remedy the violation in compliance with the zoning ordinance, within a time period established by the
82 court. Failure to remove or abate a zoning violation within the specified time period shall constitute a
83 separate misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$1,000, and any
84 such failure during any succeeding 10-day period shall constitute a separate misdemeanor offense for
85 each 10-day period punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,500.

86 6. For the collection of fees to cover the cost of making inspections, issuing permits, advertising of
87 notices and other expenses incident to the administration of a zoning ordinance or to the filing or
88 processing of any appeal or amendment thereto.

89 7. For the amendment of the regulations or district maps from time to time, or for their repeal.
90 Whenever the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, or good zoning practice requires, the
91 governing body may by ordinance amend, supplement, or change the regulations, district boundaries, or
92 classifications of property. Any such amendment may be initiated (i) by resolution of the governing
93 body; (ii) by motion of the local planning commission; or (iii) by petition of the owner, contract
94 purchaser with the owner's written consent, or the owner's agent therefor, of the property which is the
95 subject of the proposed zoning map amendment, addressed to the governing body or the local planning
96 commission, who shall forward such petition to the governing body; however, the ordinance may
97 provide for the consideration of proposed amendments only at specified intervals of time, and may
98 further provide that substantially the same petition will not be reconsidered within a specific period, not
99 exceeding one year. Any such resolution or motion by such governing body or commission proposing
100 the rezoning shall state the above public purposes therefor.

101 In any county having adopted such zoning ordinance, all motions, resolutions or petitions for
102 amendment to the zoning ordinance, and/or map shall be acted upon and a decision made within such
103 reasonable time as may be necessary which shall not exceed 12 months unless the applicant requests or
104 consents to action beyond such period or unless the applicant withdraws his motion, resolution or
105 petition for amendment to the zoning ordinance or map, or both. In the event of and upon such
106 withdrawal, processing of the motion, resolution or petition shall cease without further action as
107 otherwise would be required by this subdivision.

108 8. For the submission and approval of a plan of development prior to the issuance of building
109 permits to assure compliance with regulations contained in such zoning ordinance.

110 9. For areas and districts designated for mixed use developments or planned unit developments as
111 defined in § 15.2-2201.

112 10. For the administration of incentive zoning as defined in § 15.2-2201.

113 11. For provisions allowing the locality to enter into a voluntary agreement with a landowner that
114 would result in the downzoning of the landowner's undeveloped or underdeveloped property in exchange
115 for a tax credit equal to the amount of excess real estate taxes that the landowner has paid due to the
116 higher zoning classification. The locality may establish reasonable guidelines for determining the amount
117 of excess real estate tax collected and the method and duration for applying the tax credit. For purposes
118 of this section, "downzoning" means a zoning action by a locality that results in a reduction in a
119 formerly permitted land use intensity or density.

120 12. (Repealed effective July 1, 2007) Provisions for the clustering of single-family dwellings so as to
121 preserve open space.

122 a. A locality may, at its option, provide in its zoning or subdivision ordinance standards, conditions
123 and criteria for clustering of single-family dwellings and the preservation of open space developments.
124 In establishing such standards, conditions and criteria, the governing body may, in its discretion, include
125 any provisions it determines appropriate to ensure quality development, preservation of open space and
126 compliance with its comprehensive plan and land use ordinances. The density calculation of the cluster
127 development shall be based upon the same criteria for the property as would otherwise be permitted by
128 applicable land use ordinances. As a locality determines, at its option, to provide for clustering of
129 single-family dwellings and the preservation of open space developments, it may vary provisions for
130 such developments for each different zoning area within the locality.

131 If proposals for clustering of single-family dwellings and the preservation of open space
132 developments comply with the locality's adopted standards, conditions and criteria, the development and
133 open space preservation shall be permitted by right under the local subdivision ordinance. The
134 implementation and approval of the cluster development and open space preservation shall be done
135 administratively by the locality's staff and without a public hearing. No local ordinance shall require that
136 a special exception, special use, or conditional use permit be obtained for such developments. However,
137 any such ordinance may exempt (i) developments of two acres or less and (ii) property located in an Air
138 Installation Compatible Use Zone from the provisions of this subdivision.

139 b. Additionally, in any zoning or subdivision ordinance adopted pursuant to subdivision A 12, a
140 locality may, at its option, provide for the clustering of single-family dwellings and the preservation of
141 open space at a density calculation greater than the density permitted in the applicable land use
142 ordinance. To implement and approve such increased density development, the locality may, at its
143 option, (i) establish and provide in its zoning or subdivision ordinance standards, conditions, and criteria
144 for such development, and if the proposed development complies with those standards, conditions and
145 criteria, it shall be permitted by right and approved administratively by the locality staff in the same
146 manner provided in subdivision A 12 a, or (ii) approve the increased density development upon approval
147 of a special exception, special use permit, conditional use permit or rezoning.

148 c. Any locality that provides for clustering of single-family dwellings and preservation of open space
149 upon approval of a special exception, special use permit, conditional use permit or rezoning shall no
150 later than July 1, 2004, amend its applicable land use ordinance to comply with the provisions of
151 subdivision A 12. Any land use provisions for clustering of single-family dwellings and preservation of
152 open space adopted after the effective date of this act shall comply with subdivision A 12.
153 Notwithstanding any of the requirements of subdivision A 12 to the contrary, any local government land
154 use ordinance in affect as of January 1, 2002, that provides for the clustering of single-family dwellings
155 and preservation of open space development by right without requiring either a special exception, special
156 use permit, conditional use permit or other discretionary approval may remain in effect at the option of
157 the locality.

158 13. Provisions for requiring and considering Phase I environmental site assessments based on the
159 anticipated use of the property proposed for the subdivision or development that meet generally accepted
160 national standards for such assessments, such as those developed by the American Society for Testing
161 and Materials, and Phase II environmental site assessments, that also meet accepted national standards,
162 such as, but not limited to, those developed by the American Society for Testing and Materials, if the
163 locality deems such to be reasonably necessary, based on findings in the Phase I assessment, and in
164 accordance with regulations of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the American
165 Society for Testing and Materials. A reasonable fee may be charged for the review of such
166 environmental assessments. Such fees shall not exceed an amount commensurate with the services
167 rendered, taking into consideration the time, skill, and administrative expense involved in such review.

168 14. Provisions for requiring disclosure and remediation of contamination and other adverse
169 environmental conditions of the property prior to approval of subdivision and development plans.

170 B. Prior to the initiation of an application for a special exception, special use permit, variance,
171 rezoning or other land disturbing permit, including building permits and erosion and sediment control
172 permits, or prior to the issuance of final approval, the authorizing body may require the applicant to
173 produce satisfactory evidence that any delinquent real estate taxes owed to the locality which have been
174 properly assessed against the subject property have been paid.