

2008 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 169

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 9, 2008

Requesting the Department of Environmental Quality to study policies to mitigate the negative effects of improperly disposed of plastic bags on the Commonwealth's environment. Report.

Patron—Barlow

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the production of plastic bags has significant environmental impacts each year, including the use of over 12 million barrels of oil, and the deaths of thousands of marine animals through ingestion and entanglement; and

WHEREAS, each year, an estimated 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide, which is over one million bags per minute, and of which billions of bags end up as litter each year damaging agriculture interests and the environment; and

WHEREAS, most plastic bags are not biodegradable and break down into smaller and smaller toxic bits that contaminate soil and waterways and enter into the food web when animals accidentally ingest those materials; and

WHEREAS, plastic bags that are not littered, windblown, or recycled remain in Virginia's landfills, the capacity of which, based on current waste generation and disposal rates, will be exhausted before 2023; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Environmental Quality be requested to study policies to mitigate the negative effects of improperly disposed of plastic bags on the Commonwealth's environment.

In conducting its study, the Department of Environmental Quality shall convene stakeholders to discuss and report on potential legislative actions for introduction during the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. Stakeholders shall include representatives of agriculture, conservation, local government, manufacturing, plastics industry, timber industry, and retailers. In the selection of feasible policies, the stakeholders shall review existing policies and programs adopted in the United States and other countries.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Environmental Quality for this study, upon request.

The Department of Environmental Quality shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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