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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 100

Offered January 9, 2008

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Establishing a joint subcommittee to study nuclear power within the Commonwealth. Report.

Patrons—Cuccinelli, Newman and Wagner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, according to the Virginia Energy Plan, 36 percent of the electricity generated in Virginia in 2004 came from nuclear power plants; and

WHEREAS, the Energy Plan also notes that the operational costs of Virginia's nuclear power plants are the lowest of any type of generation except for hydroelectric, wind, and solar, and with future carbon taxes or emissions trading requirements, the competitive position of nuclear power is expected to improve; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's need for electric power is expected to continue to grow, and the federal Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2006 indicates that, from 2004 to 2030, the amount of retail sales of electricity to residential consumers in the South Atlantic states is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.9 percent per year, compared with a projected growth rate of 1.5 percent per year for sales to all U.S. residential consumers; and

WHEREAS, all of the 1.6 million pounds of uranium used to fuel the North Anna and Surry nuclear power plants is imported, though the potential to mine Virginia uranium from Coles Hill in Pittsylvania County may offer substantial economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Virginia currently has a moratorium in effect on the mining, but not the exploration, of uranium; and

WHEREAS, Dominion has asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to approve a site for new nuclear reactors at its North Anna power station; and

WHEREAS, the National Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the 2007 amendments to the Virginia Electric Utility Restructuring Act provide incentives for new nuclear generation; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is home to several nuclear energy businesses, including BWXT and Areva in the Lynchburg region and Northrop Grumman Newport News, and could benefit from growth in the nuclear energy industry; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that adequate supplies of electricity are available to meet the growing demand of Virginia consumers, it is appropriate to examine the generation of new nuclear power in Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study nuclear power within the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall consist of 10 legislative members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and 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. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) address all aspects of the production of nuclear power, including the mining of uranium the impact of the new nuclear plants on electricity rates; (ii) examine the economic development potential of nuclear power; (iii) consider whether the General Assembly should take action to support the development of additional nuclear power facilities in the Commonwealth; and (v) examine the advisability of permitting the mining of uranium for use within the Commonwealth in the generation of power.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. 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 State Corporation Commission. 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 2008 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$10,000 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members

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59 or a majority of the House members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
60 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
61 joint subcommittee.

62 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall
63 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
64 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
65 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
66 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a Senate or
67 House document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the
68 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
69 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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