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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6008

Offered June 23, 2008

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the use of biogas for transportation purposes. Report.

Patrons—Marshall, R.G., Gilbert, Miller, J.H. and Pollard

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, biogas is a mixture of methane and other gasses produced from the decomposition of organic materials; and

WHEREAS, biogas is produced naturally in landfills and from the processing of animal waste, sewage, crop waste, and cellulosic and non-cellulosic crops; and

WHEREAS, methane is a significant greenhouse gas that is estimated to be 21 times more intense a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide; and

WHEREAS, currently biogas can be captured and "flared," thereby transforming methane to carbon dioxide, but, in doing so, its energy value is wasted; and

WHEREAS, an alternative would be to capture the biogas from these renewable waste sources, convert the biogas to biomethane, and use the biomethane to replace petroleum or other fossil fuels in transportation, thus saving energy and reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the environment; and

WHEREAS, a study conducted by the Department of Energy, Biogas for Transportation Use: A 1998 Perspective, concluded that a feasible biomethane potential from these sources would be 10 billion gasoline-gallon-equivalent per year; and

WHEREAS, if this amount of biomethane were used in vehicles, it is estimated that greenhouse gases would be reduced by 500 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, which would be the emissions equivalent to removing 90 million light-duty gasoline vehicles from the road; and

WHEREAS, currently, in Irvine, California, Malmo, Sweden, and Trollhattan, Norway, biomethane generated from landfills, animal waste, and sewage is used to power transit fleets; and

WHEREAS, it is apparent that increased production of biogas represents significant environmental, economic, and energy security benefits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the use of biogas for transportation purposes. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of six legislative members, to 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 and two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) determine the amount of biogas feedstocks (landfills, animal waste, sewage, and biomass) that exist in Virginia, (ii) determine the current infrastructure that is available to produce biogas/biomethane from feedstocks, (iii) analyze possible incentives to produce biogas to be used in transportation, and (iv) examine the feasibility of establishing a pilot biogas transportation program for Virginia, including the costs and benefits.

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 Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Quality. 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 \$6,000. 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 House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The

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59 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
60 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
61 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the
62 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
63 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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