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HOUSE BILL NO. 1775

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 8, 2009

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 7 of Chapter 2 of Title 2.2 a section numbered 2.2-220.2, relating to invasive species.*

Patrons—Pollard, Janis, Poindexter and Wright

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 7 of Chapter 2 of Title 2.2 a section numbered 2.2-220.2 as follows:

§ 2.2-220.2. *Development of strategies to prevent the introduction, to control, and to eradicate invasive species.*

A. *The Secretary shall coordinate the development of strategic actions to be taken by the Commonwealth, individual state and federal agencies, private businesses, and landowners related to invasive species prevention, early detection and rapid response, control and management, research and risk assessment, and education and outreach. Such strategic actions shall include the development of a state invasive species management plan. The plan shall include a list of invasive species that pose the greatest threat to the Commonwealth. The primary purposes of the plan shall be to address the rising cost of invasive species, to improve coordination among state and federal agencies' efforts regarding invasive species prevention and management and information exchange, and to educate the public on related matters. The Secretary shall update the state invasive species management plan at least once every four years. The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall provide staff support to the Secretary to carry out his responsibilities under this section.*

B. *The invasive species management plan and coordination activities under this section shall be developed in consultation with Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Game and Inland Fisheries, Forestry, Agriculture and Consumer Services, Health, and Transportation; the Marine Resources Commission; and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The Secretary shall establish an advisory group consisting of the directors of such agencies or their representatives as well as the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry. The advisory group shall meet at least twice per year and shall seek participation from affected stakeholders such as interested federal agencies, academic institutions, commercial interests, and conservation organizations. The advisory group shall assist the Secretary in coordinating efforts and in implementing recommendations in the invasive species management plan to:*

- 1. Prevent additional introductions of invasive species to the lands and waters of the Commonwealth;*
- 2. Procure, use, and maintain native species to replace invasive species;*
- 3. Implement targeted control efforts on those invasive species that are present in the Commonwealth but are susceptible to such management actions;*
- 4. Identify and report the appearance of invasive species before they can become established and control becomes less feasible;*
- 5. Implement immediate control measures if a new invasive species is introduced in Virginia, with the aim of eradicating that species from Virginia's lands and waters if feasible given the degree of infestation; and*
- 6. Recommend legislative actions or pursue federal grants to implement the plan.*