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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 663

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 12, 2009

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the efficacy of generating electricity from windmill turbines in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patrons—Morrissey, BaCote, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Hall, Hull, Spruill and Ward

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, as the Commonwealth enters an era of increasing energy price volatility and concerns with emissions of greenhouse gases, electricity generated from the power of the wind offers the advantages of relying on a free, sustainable, and renewable resource while producing zero carbon dioxide; and

WHEREAS, skeptics have raised concerns that wind power requires high up-front capital costs, generates electricity intermittently, is noisy, may devalue property within sight of turbines, and poses risks to birds and bats; and

WHEREAS, the experiences of those attempting to develop a wind farm in Highland County in recent years illustrates that local opposition to such projects may be formidable; and

WHEREAS, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory has estimated that grid-connected wind generation currently accounts for less than 1 megawatt of the approximately 20,200 megawatts of total installed power generation capacity in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, in its Citizen Energy Plan, has stated that between 2010 and 2015 wind power could supply 400 megawatts of power on-shore in Virginia, based on current technology and transmission infrastructure, and by 2030 off-shore wind could produce almost 5,000 megawatts; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Energy has reported that areas of the Commonwealth with good-to-excellent wind resources that are consistent with utility-scale production include the Atlantic coast along the Delmarva Peninsula and the Virginia Beach area, ridge crests in the north-central part of the state, and ridge crests near the borders of West Virginia and North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCCER), in its Study of Increased Use of Renewable Energy Resources in Virginia released in 2005, stated that Virginia has the technical potential to develop between 900 and 2,000 megawatts of on-shore wind resources and between 1,300 and 31,000 megawatts of off-shore wind resources, though the economic viability of the energy is limited by accessibility to transmission facilities and other factors; and

WHEREAS, the VCCER has observed that off-shore wind is considerably more expensive than on-shore wind and other renewable energy resources in Virginia, and that off-shore wind projects do not appear to be likely in the near future; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of the technical, physical, legal, and economic issues surrounding the generation of electricity from wind turbines justifies an analysis of the extent, if any, to which wind power generated in Virginia offers a viable means of meeting the Commonwealth's future energy needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the efficacy of generating electricity from windmill turbines in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 10 legislative members. Members shall be appointed as follows: 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; and four 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.

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. 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 2009 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.

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59 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members
60 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
61 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
62 joint subcommittee.

63 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2009, and the chairman shall
64 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
65 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
66 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
67 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
68 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the
69 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
70 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

71 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
72 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
73 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2009 interim.