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SENATE BILL NO. 1492

Offered January 22, 2009

A BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-2403 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 24 of Title 15.2 a section numbered 15.2-2403.2, relating to the Wallops Research Park.

Patron—Northam

Referred to Committee on Local Government

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-2403 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted, and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 24 of Title 15.2 a section numbered 15.2-2403.2 as follows:

§ 15.2-2403. Powers of service districts.

After adoption of an ordinance or ordinances or the entry of an order creating a service district, the governing body or bodies shall have the following powers with respect to the service districts:

1. To construct, maintain, and operate such facilities and equipment as may be necessary or desirable to provide additional, more complete, or more timely governmental services within a service district, including but not limited to water supply, dams, sewerage, garbage removal and disposal, heat, light, fire-fighting equipment and power and gas systems and sidewalks; economic development services; promotion of business and retail development services; beautification and landscaping; beach and shoreline management and restoration; dredging of creeks and rivers to maintain existing uses; control of infestations of insects that may carry a disease that is dangerous to humans, gypsy moths, cankerworms or other pests identified by the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in accordance with the Virginia Pest Law (§ 3.1-188.20 et seq.); public parking; extra security, street cleaning, snow removal and refuse collection services; sponsorship and promotion of recreational and cultural activities; upon petition of over 50 percent of the property owners who own not less than 50 percent of the property to be served, construction, maintenance, and general upkeep of streets and roads; construction, maintenance, and general upkeep of streets and roads through creation of urban transportation service districts pursuant to § 15.2-2403.1; and other services, events, or activities that will enhance the public use and enjoyment of and the public safety, public convenience, and public well-being within a service district. Such services, events, or activities shall not be undertaken for the sole or dominant benefit of any particular individual, business or other private entity. Any transportation service, system, facility, roadway, or roadway appurtenance established under this subdivision that will be operated or maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation shall be established with the involvement of the governing body of the locality and meet the appropriate requirements of the Department.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 33.1-69, to provide, in addition to services authorized by subdivision 1, transportation and transportation services within a service district, regardless of whether the facilities subject to the services are or will be operated or maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, including, but not limited to: public transportation systems serving the district; transportation management services; road construction, including any new roads or improvements to existing roads; rehabilitation and replacement of existing transportation facilities or systems; and sound walls or sound barriers. However, any transportation service, system, facility, roadway, or roadway appurtenance established under this subdivision that will be operated or maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation shall be established with the involvement of the governing body of the locality and meet the appropriate requirements of the Department. The proceeds from any annual tax or portion thereof collected for road construction pursuant to subdivision 6 may be accumulated and set aside for such reasonable period of time as is necessary to finance such construction; however, the governing body or bodies shall make available an annual disclosure statement, which shall contain the amount of any such proceeds accumulated and set aside to finance such road construction.

3. To acquire in accordance with § 15.2-1800, any such facilities and equipment and rights, title, interest or easements therefor in and to real estate in such district and maintain and operate the same as may be necessary and desirable to provide the governmental services authorized by subdivisions 1 and 2.

4. To contract with any person, municipality or state agency to provide the governmental services authorized by subdivisions 1 and 2 and to construct, establish, maintain, and operate any such facilities and equipment as may be necessary and desirable in connection therewith.

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59 5. To require owners or tenants of any property in the district to connect with any such system or
60 systems, and to contract with the owners or tenants for such connections. The owners or tenants shall
61 have the right of appeal to the circuit court within 10 days from action by the governing body.

62 6. To levy and collect an annual tax upon any property in such service district subject to local
63 taxation to pay, either in whole or in part, the expenses and charges for providing the governmental
64 services authorized by subdivisions 1, 2 and 11 and for constructing, maintaining, and operating such
65 facilities and equipment as may be necessary and desirable in connection therewith; however, such
66 annual tax shall not be levied for or used to pay for schools, police, or general government services not
67 authorized by this section, and the proceeds from such annual tax shall be so segregated as to enable the
68 same to be expended in the district in which raised. Such tax may be levied on taxable real estate zoned
69 for residential, commercial, industrial or other uses, or any combination of such use classification, within
70 the geographic boundaries of the service district. In addition to the tax on property authorized herein, in
71 the City of Virginia Beach, the city council shall have the power to impose a tax on the base transient
72 room rentals, excluding hotels, motels, and travel campgrounds, within such service district at a rate or
73 percentage not higher than five percent which is in addition to any other transient room rental tax
74 imposed by the city. The proceeds from such additional transient room rental tax shall be deposited in a
75 special fund to be used only for the purpose of beach and shoreline management and restoration. Any
76 locality imposing a tax pursuant to this subdivision may base the tax on the full assessed value of the
77 taxable property within the service district, notwithstanding any special use value assessment of property
78 within the service district for land preservation pursuant to Article 4 (§ 58.1-3229 et seq.) of Chapter 32
79 of Title 58.1, provided the owner of such property has given written consent. In addition to the taxes
80 and assessments described herein, a locality creating a service district may contribute from its general
81 fund any amount of funds it deems appropriate to pay for the governmental services authorized by
82 subdivisions 1, 2, and 11 of this section.

83 7. To accept the allocation, contribution or funds of, or to reimburse from, any available source,
84 including, but not limited to, any person, authority, transportation district, locality, or state or federal
85 agency for either the whole or any part of the costs, expenses and charges incident to the acquisition,
86 construction, reconstruction, maintenance, alteration, improvement, expansion, and the operation or
87 maintenance of any facilities and services in the district.

88 8. To employ and fix the compensation of any technical, clerical, or other force and help which from
89 time to time, in their judgment may be necessary or desirable to provide the governmental services
90 authorized by subdivisions 1, 2 and 11 or for the construction, operation, or maintenance of any such
91 facilities and equipment as may be necessary or desirable in connection therewith.

92 9. To create and terminate a development board or other body to which shall be granted and
93 assigned such powers and responsibilities with respect to a special service district as are delegated to it
94 by ordinance adopted by the governing body of such locality or localities. Any such board or alternative
95 body created shall be responsible for control and management of funds appropriated for its use by the
96 governing body or bodies, and such funds may be used to employ or contract with, on such terms and
97 conditions as the board or other body shall determine, persons, municipal or other governmental entities
98 or such other entities as the development board or alternative body deems necessary to accomplish the
99 purposes for which the development board or alternative body has been created. If the district was
100 created by court order, the ordinance creating the development board or alternative body may provide
101 that the members appointed to the board or alternative body shall consist of a majority of the
102 landowners who petitioned for the creation of the district, or their designees or nominees.

103 10. To negotiate and contract with any person or municipality with regard to the connections of any
104 such system or systems with any other system or systems now in operation or hereafter established, and
105 with regard to any other matter necessary and proper for the construction or operation and maintenance
106 of any such system within the district.

107 11. To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, grant, or otherwise title to or any interests or rights
108 of not less than five years' duration in real property that will provide a means for the preservation or
109 provision of open-space land as provided for in the Open-Space Land Act (§ 10.1-1700 et seq.).
110 Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 3, the governing body shall not use the power of
111 condemnation to acquire any interest in land for the purposes of this subdivision.

112 12. To contract with any state agency or state or local authority for services within the power of the
113 agency or authority related to the financing, construction, or operation of the facilities and services to be
114 provided within the district; however, nothing in this subdivision shall authorize a locality to obligate its
115 general tax revenues, or to pledge its full faith and credit.

116 13. In the Town of Front Royal, to construct, maintain, and operate facilities, equipment, and
117 programs as may be necessary or desirable to control, eradicate, and prevent the infestation of rats and
118 removal of skunks and the conditions that harbor them.

119 14. *In Accomack County, to construct, maintain, and operate in the Wallops Research Park,*
120 *jumbo-jet taxiway facilities and other infrastructure, services, or amenities as may be necessary or*

desirable to provide access for aerospace-related economic development to the NASA/Wallops Flight Facility runway and related facilities, and to create and terminate a Wallops Research Park Partnership body, which shall consist of one representative of the NASA/Wallops Research Flight Facility, one representative of the U.S. Navy Surface Combat Systems Center, one representative of the Marine Science Consortium, one representative of the Accomack County government, and one representative of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. The Partnership body shall have all of the powers enumerated in § 15.2-2403.2. Federal appointees to the Partnership body shall maintain their absolute duties of loyalty to the U.S. government.

§ 15.2-2403.2. Virginia Wallops Research Park Leadership Council established.

A. The Virginia Wallops Research Park Leadership Council (the Council) is established as a cooperative management and oversight body to superintend the development and operation of the Wallops Research Park, a service district created pursuant to § 15.2-2400, consisting uniquely and exclusively of adjacent lands being a portion of NASA/Wallops Flight Facility, the Marine Science Consortium, and lands of Accomack County, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth. The purpose of the Council shall be to advise the Governor, state economic development officials, and the Wallops Research Park landowners on appropriate development and operations strategies for the Park with emphasis on policy recommendations that will enhance the Park's global competitive advantage in both research and technology-based commercial endeavors.

B. Persons appointed to the Council shall be selected for their knowledge of, background in, or experience with basic and applied research, emerging technologies, commercialization of the results and outputs of research activities, and the development and financing of technology intensive enterprises.

C. The Council shall consist of five members, all of whom shall serve as *ex officio* members with voting privileges: the Director of the NASA/Wallops Flight Facility or his designee, who shall retain his absolute duty of loyalty to the federal government; the Director of the U.S. Navy Surface Combat Systems Center or his designee, who shall retain his absolute duty of loyalty to the federal government; the Director of the Marine Science Consortium or his designee, who shall retain his absolute duty of loyalty to the Consortium; the Accomack County Administrator or his designee, who shall retain his absolute duty of loyalty to Accomack County; and the Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade, or his designee. All members shall be appointed to serve terms coincident with their terms of office.

D. The Council shall designate one member as its chair, and is authorized to adopt bylaws.

E. A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum. Council meetings shall be as specified in its bylaws or upon the call of the chair.

F. Members of the Council shall receive no compensation, but shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

G. The Council shall:

1. Undertake studies, gather and analyze information, and make recommendations in order to accomplish its purposes as set forth in subsection A;

2. Apply for, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from public, quasi-public or private sources, and state funds that may be appropriated by the federal government, the General Assembly, or any state government to carry out its purpose; and

3. Report annually its findings and recommendations regarding the development and operation of the Wallops Research Park. The Council may make interim reports as it deems advisable.

H. Funding necessary to support the Council's work, including but not limited to the reimbursement pursuant to subsection F, shall be provided by Accomack County from the rent revenues generated by the Wallops Research Park.

I. Accomack County shall provide staff support to the Council. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall assist the Council upon request.