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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 74

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 12, 2010

*Requesting the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to study management options for state-owned submerged lands on the seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore. Report.*

Patron—Lewis

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the coastal bays and marshes on the seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore provide economically and ecologically valuable resources to the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, this area supports valuable public commercial and recreational harvests of natural shellfish stocks alongside of a valuable private shellfish aquaculture industry; and

WHEREAS, this area is one in which globally significant concentrations of birds and other natural resources are found; and

WHEREAS, restoration efforts over the past decade have been successful in restoring sea grass habitats and offer the promise of restoring a valuable scallop fishery; and

WHEREAS, the marine habitats in this region are extremely dynamic, often changing dramatically over timescales as short as a decade, a year, or even following a single storm event; and

WHEREAS, the general demarcation of areas available for public shellfish harvesting and private aquaculture, as well as sea grass and scallop restoration, is based upon a survey completed in 1894 authority by Chapter 511 of the Acts of Assembly of 1892 establishing the natural oyster beds, rocks and shoals of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, many of these areas are reportedly no longer suitable for their designated use; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Institute of Marine Science be requested to study management options for state-owned submerged lands on the seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall:

1. Undertake a re-evaluation of the suitability of the marine bottom habitats on the seaside of the Eastern Shore for their ability to support wild fisheries, sustain a strong shellfish aquaculture industry, facilitate restoration of degraded habitats, and protect natural resources; and

2. Review alternative management options for state-owned submerged lands on the seaside of the Eastern Shore that make accommodations for the dynamic environmental conditions in the area while supporting each of the uses described previously.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2010, and for the second year by November 30, 2011, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document for each year. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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