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## SENATE BILL NO. 387

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 12, 2010

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 19.2-187.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to certificates of analysis; video conferencing.*

Patrons—Obenshain and Stuart

Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 19.2-187.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 19.2-187.1. Procedures for notifying accused of certificate of analysis; waiver; continuances.

A. In any trial and in any hearing other than a preliminary hearing, in which the attorney for the Commonwealth intends to offer a certificate of analysis into evidence pursuant to § 19.2-187, the attorney for the Commonwealth shall:

1. Provide by mail, delivery, or otherwise, a copy of the certificate to counsel of record for the accused, or to the accused if he is proceeding pro se, at no charge, no later than 28 days prior to the hearing or trial;

2. Attach to the copy of the certificate so provided under subdivision 1 a notice to the accused of his right to object to having the certificate admitted without the person who performed the analysis or examination being present and testifying. *Where two-way video conferencing is available and the Commonwealth intends to present testimony through two-way video conferencing, the notice shall specify that the analyst may be examined by two-way video conferencing;* and

3. File a copy of the certificate and notice with the clerk of the court hearing the matter on the day that the certificate and notice are provided to the accused.

B. The accused may object in writing to admission of the certificate of analysis, in lieu of testimony, as evidence of the facts stated therein and of the results of the analysis or examination. Such objection shall be filed with the court hearing the matter, with a copy to the attorney for the Commonwealth, no more than 14 days after the certificate and notice were filed with the clerk by the attorney for the Commonwealth or the objection shall be deemed waived. If timely objection is made, the certificate shall not be admissible into evidence unless (i) the testimony of the person who performed the analysis or examination is admitted into evidence describing the facts and results of the analysis or examination during the Commonwealth's case-in-chief at the hearing or trial and that person is present and subject to cross-examination by the accused, (ii) the objection is waived by the accused or his counsel in writing or before the court, or (iii) the parties stipulate before the court to the admissibility of the certificate.

*When the notice specifies that the analyst may be examined by two-way video conferencing and the accused opposes the use of testimony in such manner, the accused shall, in a separate writing, expressly object to two-way video conferencing. Failure to specifically object to testimony by two-way video conferencing shall be deemed a waiver of such objection. If objection is made, examination by two-way video conferencing shall not be allowed unless (i) the objection is waived by the accused or his counsel in writing or before the court, or (ii) the parties stipulate before the court to the admissibility of the testimony by two-way video conferencing.*

C. Where the person who performed the analysis and examination is not available for hearing or trial and the attorney for the Commonwealth has used due diligence to secure the presence of the person, the court shall order a continuance. Any continuances ordered pursuant to this subsection shall total not more than 90 days if the accused has been held continuously in custody and not more than 180 days if the accused has not been held continuously in custody.

D. Any objection by counsel for the accused, or the accused if he is proceeding pro se, to timeliness of the receipt of notice required by subsection A shall be made before hearing or trial upon his receipt of actual notice unless the accused did not receive actual notice prior to hearing or trial. A showing by the Commonwealth that the notice was mailed, delivered, or otherwise provided in compliance with the time requirements of this section shall constitute prima facie evidence that the notice was timely received by the accused. If the court finds upon the accused's objection made pursuant to this subsection, that he did not receive timely notice pursuant to subsection A, the accused's objection shall not be deemed waived and if the objection is made prior to hearing or trial, a continuance shall be ordered if requested by either party. Any continuance ordered pursuant to this subsection shall be subject to the time limitations set forth in subsection C.

E. The accused in any hearing or trial in which a certificate of analysis is offered into evidence shall

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**59** have the right to call the person performing such analysis or examination or involved in the chain of  
**60** custody as a witness therein, and examine him in the same manner as if he had been called as an  
**61** adverse witness. Such witness shall be summoned and appear at the cost of the Commonwealth.