

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 648

Requesting the Department of Housing and Community Development, in cooperation with the Department of Rehabilitative Services, to study the feasibility and appropriateness of amendments to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to provide accessible routes for persons with disabilities into public and private buildings and facilities and promote universal features in dwelling units. Report.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 2011

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2011

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth to ensure the accessibility of persons with disabilities to all public buildings and private buildings open to the public and to provide universal design features in dwelling units; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth for persons with disabilities to enjoy maximum self-sufficiency in the built environment; and

WHEREAS, providing the shortest accessible route that connects to accessible parking and passenger loading zones and accessible building and facility entrances, as well as the use of universal design features in dwelling units, are among the first steps to creating maximum self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Housing and Community Development, in cooperation with the Department of Rehabilitative Services, be requested to study the feasibility and appropriateness of amendments to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to provide accessible routes for persons with disabilities into public and private buildings and facilities and promote universal features in dwelling units.

In conducting its study, the Department of Housing and Community Development, in cooperation with the Department of Rehabilitative Services, shall:

1. On or before July 1, 2012, complete a study on proposed amendments to the Uniform Statewide Building Code to provide access routes for persons with disabilities into public and private buildings or facilities and enhance the availability of incentives for the greater use of universal design features in dwelling units;

2. Examine the costs of retroactive or new construction mandates to private businesses and local governments and technical and feasibility issues addressing compliance requirements that may affect the structural integrity of buildings, the feasibility of requiring universal design features in dwelling units, and other similar issues;

3. Examine additional options, including prioritizing components of accessible routes and establishing a different distribution schedule for the use of the 20 percent of renovation dollars required in the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) for improving accessibility in existing buildings where accessible routes and entrances are deemed technically infeasible; and

4. Submit the joint findings and recommendations of the Departments on the feasibility and appropriateness of amendments to the Uniform Statewide Building Code.

The Departments shall include as participants in the study representatives of stakeholders including business groups, the building community, design professionals, local governments, the disability community, and others as it deems appropriate.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Rehabilitative Services by the Virginia Disability Commission, the Virginia Board for Persons with Disabilities, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and the Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Departments for this study, upon request.

The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Rehabilitative Services shall complete their meetings for the first year by November 30, 2011, and for the second year by November 30, 2012, and the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitative Services shall submit jointly to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of their 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.

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