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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 346

Offered January 12, 2011

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Requesting the Department of Education to study recycling education in the public schools. Report.

Patron—Barker

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, modern consumer consumption of many more products, new packaging, and technological products containing nonbiodegradable materials have significantly increased the volume of trash; and

WHEREAS, millions of tons of trash are generated each year from many sources, including bottles and aluminum cans, paper, boxes, yard waste, glass, plastics, clothing, furniture, and metals, and harmful chemicals and greenhouse gases are released from the rubbish in landfills, adversely affecting human life and the environment; and

WHEREAS, conservation education strives to expose citizens to the relationship between our natural resources and ecosystems, promote the wise use and conservation of natural resources, develop critical thinking skills needed to understand the complexities of ecological problems, and encourage respect for our natural resources and the need to protect the environment; and

WHEREAS, students today are faced with many environmental issues, including global warming, the use of pesticides, clean air and water, conservation and ecological preservation, prevention of pollution, organic farming, and refuse reclamation and recycling; and

WHEREAS, recycling involves sorting and processing used materials into brand new products and valuable resources, and recycling reduces the need for more landfills; prevents pollution; reduces the demand for energy; stimulates the economy through the creation of jobs; decreases emissions of greenhouse gases; conserves limited natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals; and helps sustain the environment for future generations; and

WHEREAS, it is important that students learn and understand the relationship between the environment, ecosystems, and recycling, and many schools throughout the nation have become "green schools," and now include recycling education as a part of the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, recycling education programs in the public schools promote hands-on instruction, offer opportunities for practical application of instruction in relevant disciplines, provide an opportunity within the educational framework to assist students in forming lifelong habits that foster respect and appreciation for the environment and natural resources, and enable students to positively impact the world in which they live; and

WHEREAS, providing recycling education in the public schools can be conducted in various ways by incorporating recycling education programs within the current curriculum and Standards of Learning with little or no change and cost, and some school divisions in Virginia already offer recycling education programs; and

WHEREAS, recycling education benefits humans and the environment, allows students and teachers to put recycling principles into practice, stimulates creativity and critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and reinforces good stewardship of the environment and natural resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study recycling education in the public schools.

In conducting its study, the Department of Education shall (i) evaluate the feasibility of requiring and promoting recycling education programs in the public schools; (ii) ascertain the number of and identify school divisions that have successfully implemented these programs; (iii) review recycling education programs in other states to determine program components, costs, and methods of implementation and evaluation; and (iv) determine ways to increase recycling within public schools in Virginia.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department of Education by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Education for this study, upon request.

The Department of Education shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2011, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report 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 2012 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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