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HOUSE BILL NO. 522

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 10, 2012

A BILL to amend and reenact § 10.1-204 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the use of wheelchairs or other power-driven mobility devices on the statewide system of trails.

Patrons—Farrell, Hodges, Hope, Massie, Minchew, O'Bannon, Ramadan and Webert

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 10.1-204 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 10.1-204. Statewide system of trails.

A. As used in this section, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Other power-driven mobility device" means any mobility device powered by batteries, fuel, or other engines, whether or not designed primarily for use by individuals with mobility disabilities, that is used by individuals with mobility disabilities for the purpose of locomotion, including golf cars, electronic personal assistive mobility devices (EPAMDs) such as the Segway PT, or any mobility device designed to operate in areas without defined pedestrian routes, but that is not a wheelchair within the meaning of this section.

"Wheelchair" means a manually-operated or power-driven device designed primarily for use by an individual with a mobility disability for the main purpose of locomotion.

B. The Department is authorized to enter into such agreements and to acquire interests as may be necessary to establish, maintain, protect, and regulate a statewide system of trails in order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreational needs of an expanding population, and in order to promote public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoor, natural, and remote areas of the Commonwealth. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department shall not develop, establish, or extend any system of trails, including linear parks or greenways, in any county having the county manager form of government, unless it has submitted to the appropriate local agency, commission, or board, a plan of development, where such plan is required by local ordinance, for the proposed system of trails.

BC. The statewide system of trails shall be composed of:

1. Scenic trails so located as to provide maximum potential for the appreciation of natural areas and for the conservation and enjoyment of the significant scenic, historic, natural, ecological, geological, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass;

2. Recreation trails to provide a variety of outdoor recreation uses in or reasonably accessible to urban areas; and

3. Connecting trails or side trails to provide additional points of public access to recreation trails or scenic trails, or to provide connections between such trails, or to provide access from urban areas to major outdoor recreation sites.

D. Each trail shall be limited to foot, horse, or nonmotorized bicycle use, or a combination thereof, as deemed appropriate by the Department. The use of motorized vehicles by the public shall be prohibited along any of the scenic, recreation, or connecting or side trails. This statewide system of trails may contain, at the discretion of the Department, camping sites, shelters, and related public-use and management facilities, which will not substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trails.

E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Department from allowing the use of wheelchairs or other power-driven mobility devices by disabled individuals on the statewide system of trails in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327).

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Department is authorized to permit the operation of electric power-assisted bicycles and electric personal assistive mobility devices as defined in § 46.2-100 on any bicycle path or trail designated by the Department for such use.

INTRODUCED

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