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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 63

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 7, 2014

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study ways to preserve the Virginia Bobwhite quail population. Report.

Patrons—Hanger and Deeds; Delegates: Austin and Rasoul

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 1988, the General Assembly recognized that the Bobwhite quail was in drastic decline and created a joint subcommittee pursuant to House Joint Resolution 114 to study the problem and recommend ways to preserve the quail population; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, the joint subcommittee reported its findings (House Document 44), including recommendations that:

1. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), in cooperation with all interested parties increase its efforts to protect, preserve, and create Bobwhite quail habitat;

2. The DGIF increase its education and technical efforts to better inform the public regarding the history, habitat requirements, and management of the Bobwhite quail;

3. The DGIF be encouraged to develop close working relationships with those state and federal agencies that administer agricultural and conservation programs so as to ensure the coordination of habitat management with other conservation and economic objectives;

4. Landowner liability statutes be modified to give landowners more of an incentive to allow the public to hunt on their lands; and

5. The DGIF conduct a comprehensive study to assess the diverse factors affecting quail populations dynamics, including the effects of chemicals and agricultural land on the Bobwhite quail; and

WHEREAS, the report warned that to achieve a significant increase in the Bobwhite quail population over time, quail hunting had to be managed as intelligently as habitat; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee recognized that it was recommending an "ambitious program" to preserve the Bobwhite quail and that, in doing so, personnel and funds would be needed in addition to the two small-game biologists approved by the 1988 General Assembly Session; and

WHEREAS, since the 1989 report, much has been done by DGIF to preserve and protect Bobwhite quail; unfortunately, the population continues to decline in spite of a few success stories in various areas of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, a number of states currently participate in a joint effort to save the quail known as the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study ways to preserve the Virginia Bobwhite quail population. The joint subcommittee shall consist of seven legislative members. Members shall be appointed as follows: two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules and five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. The joint subcommittee may appoint an advisory committee consisting of persons representing the forest products industry, the farming community, state agencies that control public lands, public utilities, large landowners; quail hunters; and wildlife and conservation organizations.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) develop strategies for preserving the Bobwhite quail population and (ii) determine the resources, financial and staffing, necessary to implement such strategies.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2014 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$13,160 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

59 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members
60 or a majority of the House members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the
61 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the
62 joint subcommittee.

63 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, and the chairman shall
64 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
65 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The
66 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
67 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations (for publication as a
68 document). The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the
69 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and
70 shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

71 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
72 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
73 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2014 interim.