

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 63

Requesting the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to review ways to preserve the Virginia Bobwhite quail population. Report.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2014
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2014

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, in cooperation with all interested parties, increase its efforts to protect, preserve, and create Bobwhite quail habitat;
2. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries increase its education and technical efforts to better inform the public regarding the history, habitat requirements, and management of the Bobwhite quail;
3. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries 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 Department of Game and Inland Fisheries conduct a comprehensive study to assess the diverse factors affecting quail population 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 the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to preserve and protect Bobwhite quail, but 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, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries be requested to review ways to preserve the Virginia Bobwhite quail population. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall review existing efforts to restore habitat and to preserve, protect, and reintroduce Bobwhite quail. Further, the review shall include recommendations on strategies to achieve the goal of preserving the Virginia Bobwhite quail population and identify the resources and policies needed to implement those strategies. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary and report of its progress in meeting the requests of this resolution no later than the first day of the 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary and report shall be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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