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HOUSE BILL NO. 526

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 9, 2016

A BILL to amend and reenact § 58.1-3666 of the Code of Virginia, relating to living shorelines.

Patron—Hodges

Referred to Committee on Finance

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 58.1-3666 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 58.1-3666. Wetlands and riparian buffers; living shorelines.

Wetlands, as defined herein, that are subject to a perpetual easement permitting inundation by water, and riparian buffers, as defined herein, that are subject to a perpetual easement permitting inundation by water, are hereby declared to be a separate class of property and shall constitute a classification for local taxation separate from other classifications of real property. The governing body of any county, city or town may, by ordinance, exempt or partially exempt such property from local taxation. *In addition, any living shoreline project approved by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission or the applicable local wetlands board and not prohibited by local ordinance that satisfies the definition of a living shoreline consistent with § 28.2-104.1 shall qualify for full exemption from such taxation by local governments.*

"Riparian buffer" means an area of trees, shrubs or other vegetation, subject to a perpetual easement permitting inundation by water, that is (i) at least thirty-five feet in width, (ii) adjacent to a body of water, and (iii) managed to maintain the integrity of stream channels and shorelines and reduce the effects of upland sources of pollution by trapping, filtering, and converting sediments, nutrients, and other chemicals.

"Wetlands" means an area that is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency or duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, and that is subject to a perpetual easement permitting inundation by water.

INTRODUCED

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