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**HOUSE BILL NO. 977**

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 12, 2016

*A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 62.1-44.5 and 62.1-44.19:6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to discharges into state waters; reporting.*

Patrons—Lopez and Torian

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 62.1-44.5 and 62.1-44.19:6 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 62.1-44.5. Prohibition of waste discharges or other quality alterations of state waters except as authorized by permit; notification required.**

A. Except in compliance with a certificate or permit issued by the Board or other entity authorized by the Board to issue a certificate or permit pursuant to this chapter, it shall be unlawful for any person to:

1. Discharge into state waters sewage, industrial wastes, other wastes, or any noxious or deleterious substances;

2. Excavate in a wetland;

3. Otherwise alter the physical, chemical or biological properties of state waters and make them detrimental to the public health, or to animal or aquatic life, or to the uses of such waters for domestic or industrial consumption, or for recreation, or for other uses; or

4. On and after October 1, 2001, conduct the following activities in a wetland:

a. New activities to cause draining that significantly alters or degrades existing wetland acreage or functions;

b. Filling or dumping;

c. Permanent flooding or impounding; or

d. New activities that cause significant alteration or degradation of existing wetland acreage or functions.

5. Discharge stormwater into state waters from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems or land disturbing activities.

B. Any person in violation of the provisions of subsection A who discharges or causes or allows (i) a discharge of sewage, industrial waste, other wastes or any noxious or deleterious substance into or upon state waters or (ii) a discharge that may reasonably be expected to enter state waters shall, upon learning of the discharge, promptly notify, but in no case later than 24 12 hours the Board, the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, or the coordinator of emergency services appointed pursuant to § 44-146.19 for the political subdivision reasonably expected to be affected by the discharge. Written notice to the Board and the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality shall follow initial notice within the time frame specified by the federal Clean Water Act.

**§ 62.1-44.19:6. Citizen right-to-know provisions.**

A. The Board, based on the information in the 303(d) and 305(b) reports, shall:

1. Request the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries or the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to post notices at public access points to all toxic impaired waters. The notice shall be prepared by the Board and shall contain (i) the basis for the impaired designation and (ii) a statement of the potential health risks provided by the Virginia Department of Health. The Board shall annually notify local newspapers, and persons who request notice, of any posting and its contents. The Board shall coordinate with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to assure that adequate notice of posted waters is provided to those purchasing hunting and fishing licenses.

2. Maintain a "citizen hot-line" for citizens to obtain, either telephonically or electronically, information about the condition of waterways, including information on toxics, toxic discharges, permit violations and other water quality related issues.

3. Make information regarding the presence of toxics in fish tissue and sediments available to the public on the Internet and through other reasonable means for at least five years after the information is received by the Department of Environmental Quality. The Department of Environmental Quality shall post on the Internet and in the Virginia Register on or about January 1 and July 1 of each year an announcement of any new data that has been received over the past six months and shall make a copy

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59 of the information available upon request.

60 B. The Board *or the Department of Environmental Quality* shall provide to a local newspaper  
61 *newspapers, television stations, and radio stations* the discharge information reported to ~~the Director of~~  
62 the Department of Environmental Quality pursuant to *subsection B of § 62.1-44.5*; when the Virginia  
63 Department of Health determines that the discharge may be detrimental to the public health or the Board  
64 determines that the discharge may impair beneficial uses of state waters *as soon as practicable after*  
65 *receipt of such information by the Department of Environmental Quality.*