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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 297

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 11, 2017

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the ongoing efforts throughout the Commonwealth with regard to coastal flooding adaptation and resiliency. Report.

Patron—Wagner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 50 (2012) and Senate Joint Resolution No. 76 (2012) directed the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to study strategies for adaptation to prevent recurrent flooding in Tidewater and Eastern Shore Virginia localities; and

WHEREAS, the resulting VIMS report, entitled "Recurrent Flooding Study for Tidewater Virginia," published as Senate Document 3 (2013), stated that recurrent flooding impacts all localities in Virginia's coastal zone and is predicted to become worse over reasonable planning horizons (20 to 50 years); and

WHEREAS, VIMS offered several recommendations, including that the Commonwealth, working with its coastal localities, (i) begin comprehensive and coordinated planning efforts; (ii) initiate identification, collection, and analysis of data needed to support effective planning for response efforts; and (iii) take a lead role in addressing recurrent flooding in Virginia for the following reasons: (a) accessing relevant federal resources for planning and mitigation may be enhanced through state mediation, (b) flooding problems are linked to water bodies and therefore often transcend locality boundaries, and (c) prioritizing flood management actions must be based in part on risk, and therefore the Commonwealth must oversee the necessary studies to determine adaptation strategies as well as implementation of the agreed-upon strategies; and

WHEREAS, VIMS found that "impacts from flooding can range from temporary road closures to the loss of homes, loss of businesses, property and life. In coastal Virginia, the cost of large storm damage can range from millions to hundreds of millions of dollars per storm. With a long history of flooding from coastal storms, there is a keen interest in Virginia to identify areas of potential flooding and establish measures or adaptation strategies to reduce the impact of future flood events"; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study mandated by House Joint Resolution No. 132 (2012) and presented on October 15, 2013, entitled "Review of Disaster Preparedness Planning in Virginia," stated: "The state generally has strong disaster response plans, but deficiencies in evacuation and shelter plans may compromise the safety of the Hampton Roads population during a catastrophic disaster"; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Housing Commission studied this issue through its Housing and Environmental Standards Work Group and found that zoning, building codes, and planning issues will all be affected by recurrent flooding; and

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 16 (2014) and Senate Joint Resolution No. 3 (2014) established the Joint Subcommittee to Formulate Recommendations for the Development of a Comprehensive and Coordinated Planning Effort to Address Recurrent Flooding and House Joint Resolution No. 84 (2016) and Senate Joint Resolution No. 58 (2016) continued the Joint Subcommittee and renamed it the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding is on the path of advancing Virginia as the coastal states' leader in advancing resiliency strategies and, most importantly, protecting its citizens and business assets; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency, created by legislation recommended by the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding, is operated jointly at Old Dominion University, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and The College of William and Mary, The Center's interdisciplinary studies and investigations regarding resilience research show the complexity of the coastal flooding and adaptation processes; and

WHEREAS, various state agencies expend state resources or award federal or state grant funds, or both, relevant to adaptation, making it challenging to gauge the metrics of the programs and utilization of funds to the citizens of the Commonwealth and may prevent a statewide coordinated best practices adaptation implementation system; and

WHEREAS, the need exists to ensure that the Coastal Flooding Adaptation Officer or other designated person is able to coordinate and implement oversight of the expenditure of state funds, the distribution of federal or private grant funds, the outcomes generated by such expenditures, and the implementation of best practices; now, therefore, be it

INTRODUCED

SJ297

59 RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and
60 Review Commission be directed to study the ongoing efforts throughout the Commonwealth with regard
61 to coastal flooding adaptation and resiliency.

62 In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall determine the
63 effectiveness of ongoing efforts throughout the Commonwealth with regard to coastal flooding
64 adaptation and resiliency and issue appropriate recommendations.

65 All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review
66 Commission for this study, upon request.

67 The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by
68 November 30, 2017, and for the second year by November 30, 2018, and the chairman shall submit to
69 the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and
70 recommendations no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for
71 each year. Each executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review
72 Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and
73 recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports
74 shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for
75 the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's
76 website.