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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 610

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled December 26, 2018

Requesting the Secretary of Natural Resources to study the effects of wind tide flooding in the Southern Watershed. Report.

 Patrons—Knight and Turpin

 Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, tides in Back Bay and its adjacent, mostly freshwater, waterways in the Southern Watershed are not impacted by the moon like the ocean but instead rise and fall according to winds; and

WHEREAS, frequent wind tides push water against the low-lying land surrounding Back Bay and the North Landing River, which can result in flooding, especially when the winds are from the south; and

WHEREAS, these south winds drive coastal waters up into Back Bay from the Pamlico, Albemarle, and Currituck Sounds; and

WHEREAS, in less than two years, Back Bay and its tributaries have experienced three significant wind tide events; and

WHEREAS, flooding is made worse by rising sea level and subsidence that have caused water levels to rise approximately one inch every four to five years or approximately one foot every 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the City of Virginia Beach is currently conducting a study entitled "Comprehensive Sea Level Rise and Recurrent Flooding Study and Stormwater Modeling and Master Drainage" to analyze this issue and educate members of the public; and

WHEREAS, it is hypothesized that impacts from flood elevations could be reduced with strategies such as (i) perimeter protection such as seawalls or levees or raised roadways serving as levees; (ii) tide gates and backflow prevention along with drainage improvements; (iii) elevated homes; (iv) restoration of marshes and submerged aquatic vegetation, especially along critical pathways, for water flow; (v) marsh terraces to impede water flow; (vi) shoreline stabilization using hybrid living shorelines; (vii) strategic opening of the Great Bridge Lock; (viii) erection of pumps or outfalls to divert water to the Atlantic Ocean; or (ix) land subsidence reversal by means of injecting water into subsurface aquifers in coordination with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District SWIFT water project; and

WHEREAS, some solutions may be vastly expensive and would require state resources to complete; and

WHEREAS, the present and future economic impact of southerly wind tide flooding is not fully known but is likely to be large and far-reaching; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth to assist the City in assessing the impact and finding a solution to the problem of southerly wind tide flooding that will continue to worsen and cause increasing economic damage to the region; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Secretary of Natural Resources be requested to study the effects of wind tide flooding in the Southern Watershed.

In conducting his study, the Secretary of Natural Resources (the Secretary) shall (i) coordinate with and provide resources to the City of Virginia Beach to assess the impacts of wind tide flooding in the Southern Watershed, (ii) research the viability of a range of solutions aimed at addressing the root causes and effects of wind tide flooding in the Southern Watershed, (iii) identify the time frames and economic costs of various solutions, and (iv) make recommendations for state action based on all relevant factors.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Secretary for this study, upon request.

The Secretary of Natural Resources shall complete his meetings by November 30, 2019, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of his findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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