

2019 SESSION

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 311

Offered January 9, 2019

Prefiled January 9, 2019

Requesting the Department of Housing and Community Development to study the permitting processes in the Commonwealth for broadband deployment and renewable energy construction projects. Report.

Patron—Boysko

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, broadband access is an essential component of modern life, delivering important civic and educational benefits and acting as an important driver of economic growth in communities; and

WHEREAS, the use of renewable energy has significant environmental and economic benefits, including reducing types of air pollution and creating jobs in manufacturing and installation; and

WHEREAS, broadband deployment and renewable energy projects require various permits or approvals, often in multiple jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, identifying and sharing best permitting practices, including those addressing fees and rates, application review timeframes, access to the status of permit applications, and associated statutes could be beneficial to local review of proposed projects; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Department of Housing and Community Development be requested to study the permitting processes in the Commonwealth for broadband deployment and renewable energy construction projects. The study shall examine ways to streamline the permitting process across the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) shall identify and make recommendations for streamlining existing fee structures, timelines for permit approval, and procedures for modifying a permit. The Department shall also consider possible advantages and disadvantages of making the permitting process available online.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Department by the Center for Innovative Technology. The Department shall consult various stakeholders, including the Center for Innovative Technology, the Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, the Broadband Advisory Council, the Virginia Energy Development and Energy Storage Authority, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association, and the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department for this study, upon request.

The Department shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2019, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its 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.

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