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## HOUSE BILL NO. 1034

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 3.2 a chapter numbered 35.1, consisting of a section numbered 3.2-3510, relating to Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund; grant program.

Patrons—Rasoul, Cole, J.G., Guzman and Keam

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

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

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 3.2 a chapter numbered 35.1, consisting of a section numbered 3.2-3510, as follows:**

**CHAPTER 35.1**

**LOCAL FOOD AND FARMING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT.**

**§ 3.2-3510. Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund; Grant Program.**

A. For the purposes of this chapter:

"Food hub" means a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen such producers' ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

"Fund" means the Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund.

"Program" means the Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Grant Program.

B. There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Fund. The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of grants to be awarded by the Department pursuant to the Program. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Commissioner.

C. The Local Food and Farming Infrastructure Grant Program is hereby established for the purpose of awarding grants on a competitive basis from funds available from the Fund to infrastructure development projects that support local food production and sustainable farming. The Program shall be administered by the Department. In administering the Program, the Department shall establish and publish guidelines and criteria for grant awards, including guidelines and criteria governing agreements between the Department and grant recipients relating to the development of projects that establish or maintain (i) farmers markets pursuant to Chapter 35; (ii) food hubs; or (iii) processing facilities that are primarily locally owned, including commercial kitchens, packaging and labeling facilities, animal slaughtering facilities, or other facilities, and that are primarily utilized for the processing of meats, dairy products, produce, or other products. Such guidelines and criteria shall favor projects that create infrastructure in proximity to small-scale rural agricultural producers. The Department shall oversee each grant awarded through the Program and shall require each recipient to provide an annual report on each such grant.

INTRODUCED

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