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HOUSE BILL NO. 1189

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-205.1:1, relating to the establishment of the Coal and Energy Worker Relief Task Force.*

Patron—Wampler

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

- 1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-205.1:1 as follows:**
§ 2.2-205.1:1. Coal and Energy Worker Relief Task Force created; membership; duties.

A. As used in this section:

"Coal or energy operations" means the conduct of a business related to the exploration for or the extraction, processing, or transportation of coal or natural gas within the Commonwealth.

"Displaced coal and energy worker" means an individual residing in the Commonwealth whose employment with a person engaged in coal or energy operations terminates pursuant to the complete or partial cessation or reduction of the person's business, whether resulting from a bankruptcy proceeding in which the employer is a debtor or for business reasons.

B. There is hereby established the Coal and Energy Worker Relief Task Force (the Task Force). The Task Force shall be composed of the Chief Workforce Development Officer and the Directors, or their designees, of the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Employment Commission, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of Social Services, and a representative of the Career Works network established by the Workforce Development Board to be appointed by the Chief Workforce Development Advisor.

C. The Task Force shall be chaired by the Chief Workforce Development Officer and be deployed at the direction of the Governor. Staff support for the Task Force shall be provided by the Office of the Governor and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade. The Task Force shall meet at least quarterly on such dates and times as the members determine. A majority of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum.

D. The purposes of the Task Force are to (i) provide a single point of contact for displaced coal and energy workers; (ii) direct resources of the Virginia Employment Commission, state and regional workforce systems, the Department of Social Services, and Virginia's community colleges to areas where coal or energy operations have ceased or reduced operations; and (iii) develop a package of assistance measures that is scalable and transferable across the Commonwealth.

E. The Task Force shall undertake such measures and activities it deems necessary and appropriate to support the agencies represented in the Task Force in providing, coordinating, and promoting assistance to displaced coal and energy workers, including assistance in applying for unemployment benefits and social service programs; accessing health care; obtaining health benefit plan coverage; accessing career development and job training; and securing employment. In so doing, the Task Force is authorized to coordinate its efforts with those of workforce development boards from other states.

F. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Task Force and, upon request, assist the Task Force in the performance of its efforts to assist displaced coal and natural gas workers.

G. On or before December 1 of each year, the Task Force shall report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its activities.

INTRODUCED

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