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**HOUSE BILL NO. 672**

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
(Proposed by the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns  
on January 31, 2020)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Willett)

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-2200, 15.2-2223, 15.2-2283, 15.2-2284, and 15.2-4209 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 55.4, consisting of a section numbered 2.2-5515, relating to state, regional, and local planning; climate change.*

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

**1. That §§ 15.2-2200, 15.2-2223, 15.2-2283, 15.2-2284, and 15.2-4209 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 55.4, consisting of a section numbered 2.2-5515, as follows:**

**CHAPTER 55.4.****CLIMATE CHANGE PREPAREDNESS ACT.**

**§ 2.2-5515. Policy of the Commonwealth regarding climate change; responsibilities of state agencies.**

A. As used in this chapter, "state agency" means any agency, institution, board, bureau, commission, council, or instrumentality of state government in the executive branch.

B. It shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to prevent and to minimize actions that contribute to the detrimental effects of climate change in the Commonwealth. Any state agency shall examine any new regulation in furtherance of this policy.

**§ 15.2-2200. Declaration of legislative intent.**

This chapter is intended to encourage localities to improve the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of communities to the end that transportation systems be carefully planned; that new community centers be developed with adequate highway, utility, health, educational, and recreational facilities; that the need for mineral resources and the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth; that the concerns of military installations be recognized and taken into account in consideration of future development of areas immediately surrounding installations and that where practical, installation commanders shall be consulted on such matters by local officials; that residential areas be provided with healthy surroundings for family life; that agricultural and forestal land be preserved; *that the impacts from and causes of climate change be minimized or prevented*; and that the growth of the community be consonant with the efficient and economical use of public funds.

**§ 15.2-2223. Comprehensive plan to be prepared and adopted; scope and purpose.**

A. The local planning commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the territory within its jurisdiction and every governing body shall adopt a comprehensive plan for the territory under its jurisdiction.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan, the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of its territory and inhabitants, *including reasonably foreseeable needs that will arise as a result of climate change*. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature, including any road improvement and any transportation improvement, shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be. *The comprehensive plan shall consider the impact of any feature or improvement in relation to climate change and the effects thereof and shall seek to minimize or prevent such impact to the greatest extent practicable, including greenhouse gas reduction and energy efficiency strategies; measures for protecting and adapting public infrastructure, services, natural systems, and resources from climate change impacts; and coordinating and communicating locally and regionally to monitor and address the changing needs and conditions of the community.*

B. 1. As part of the comprehensive plan, each locality shall develop a transportation plan that designates a system of transportation infrastructure needs and recommendations that include the designation of new and expanded transportation facilities and that support the planned development of

the territory covered by the plan and shall include, as appropriate, but not be limited to, roadways, bicycle accommodations, pedestrian accommodations, railways, bridges, waterways, airports, ports, and public transportation facilities. The plan shall recognize and differentiate among a hierarchy of roads such as expressways, arterials, and collectors. In developing the plan, the locality shall take into consideration how to align transportation infrastructure and facilities with affordable, accessible housing and community services that are located within the territory in order to facilitate community integration of the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Transportation shall, upon request, provide localities with technical assistance in preparing such transportation plan.

2. The transportation plan shall include a map that shall show road and transportation improvements, including the cost estimates of such road and transportation improvements from the Virginia Department of Transportation, taking into account the current and future needs of residents in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

3. The transportation plan, and any amendment thereto pursuant to § 15.2-2229, shall be consistent with the Commonwealth Transportation Board's Statewide Transportation Plan developed pursuant to § 33.2-353, the Six-Year Improvement Program adopted pursuant to subsection B of § 33.2-214, and the location of routes to be followed by roads comprising systems of state highways pursuant to subsection A of § 33.2-208. The locality shall consult with the Virginia Department of Transportation to assure such consistency is achieved. The transportation plan need reflect only those changes in the annual update of the Six-Year Improvement Program that are deemed to be significant new, expanded, or relocated roadways.

4. Prior to the adoption of the transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan, the locality shall submit such plan or amendment to the Department for review and comment. The Department shall conduct its review and provide written comments to the locality on the consistency of the transportation plan or any amendment to the provisions of subdivision 1. The Department shall provide such written comments to the locality within 90 days of receipt of the plan or amendment, or such other shorter period of time as may be otherwise agreed upon by the Department and the locality.

5. The locality shall submit a copy of the adopted transportation plan or any amendment to the transportation plan to the Department for informational purposes. If the Department determines that the transportation plan or amendment is not consistent with the provisions of subdivision 1, the Department shall notify the Commonwealth Transportation Board so that the Board may take appropriate action in accordance with subsection F of § 33.2-214.

6. If the adopted transportation plan designates corridors planned to be served by mass transit, as defined in § 33.2-100, a portion of its allocation from (i) the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority distribution specified in subdivision B 1 of § 33.2-2510, (ii) the commercial and industrial real property tax revenue specified in § 58.1-3221.3, and (iii) the secondary system road construction program, as described in Article 5 (§ 33.2-351 et seq.) of Chapter 3 of Title 33.2, may be used for the purpose of utility undergrounding in the planned corridor, if the locality matches 100 percent of the state allocation.

7. Each locality's amendments or updates to its transportation plan as required by subdivisions 2 through 5 shall be made on or before its ongoing scheduled date for updating its transportation plan.

C. The comprehensive plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the locality's long-range recommendations for the general development of the territory covered by the plan. It may include, but need not be limited to:

1. The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, including age-restricted, housing; business; industrial; agricultural; mineral resources; conservation; active and passive recreation; public service; flood plain and drainage; and other areas;

2. The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, sports playing fields, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;

3. The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;

4. The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable measures to provide for the continued availability, quality, and sustainability of groundwater and surface water;

5. A capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable;

6. The location of existing or proposed recycling centers;

7. The location of military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas; and

8. The designation of corridors or routes for electric transmission lines of 150 kilovolts or more; and  
9. *The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable measures to prevent and minimize the impact from and causes of climate change.*

D. The comprehensive plan shall include the designation of areas and implementation of measures for the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of affordable housing, which is sufficient to meet

the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

E. The comprehensive plan shall consider strategies to provide broadband infrastructure that is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses in the locality. To this end, local planning commissions may consult with and receive technical assistance from the Center for Innovative Technology, among other resources.

**§ 15.2-2283. Purpose of zoning ordinances.**

Zoning ordinances shall be for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety or general welfare of the public and of further accomplishing the objectives of § 15.2-2200. To these ends, such ordinances shall be designed to give reasonable consideration to each of the following purposes, where applicable: (i) to provide for adequate light, air, convenience of access, and safety from fire, flood, impounding structure failure, crime and other dangers; (ii) to reduce or prevent congestion in the public streets; (iii) to facilitate the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community; (iv) to facilitate the provision of adequate police and fire protection, disaster evacuation, civil defense, transportation, water, sewerage, flood protection, schools, parks, forests, playgrounds, recreational facilities, airports and other public requirements; (v) to protect against destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas and working waterfront development areas; (vi) to protect against one or more of the following: overcrowding of land, undue density of population in relation to the community facilities existing or available, obstruction of light and air, danger and congestion in travel and transportation, or loss of life, health, or property from fire, flood, impounding structure failure, panic or other dangers; (vii) to encourage economic development activities that provide desirable employment and enlarge the tax base; (viii) to provide for the preservation of agricultural and forestal lands and other lands of significance for the protection of the natural environment; (ix) to protect approach slopes and other safety areas of licensed airports, including United States government and military air facilities; (x) to promote the creation and preservation of affordable housing suitable for meeting the current and future needs of the locality as well as a reasonable proportion of the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated; (xi) to provide reasonable protection against encroachment upon military bases, military installations, and military airports and their adjacent safety areas, excluding armories operated by the Virginia National Guard; ~~and~~ (xii) to provide reasonable modifications in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.) or state and federal fair housing laws, as applicable; ~~and (xiii) to prevent and minimize the impacts from and causes of climate change.~~ Such ordinance may also include reasonable provisions, not inconsistent with applicable state water quality standards, to protect surface water and ground water as defined in § 62.1-255.

**§ 15.2-2284. Matters to be considered in drawing and applying zoning ordinances and districts.**

Zoning ordinances and districts shall be drawn and applied with reasonable consideration for the existing use and character of property, the comprehensive plan, the suitability of property for various uses, the trends of growth or change, the current and future requirements of the community as to land for various purposes as determined by population and economic studies and other studies, the transportation requirements of the community, the requirements for airports, housing, schools, parks, playgrounds, recreation areas and other public services, the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of flood plains, *the impacts from and causes of climate change*, the protection of life and property from impounding structure failures, the preservation of agricultural and forestal land, the conservation of properties and their values and the encouragement of the most appropriate use of land throughout the locality.

**§ 15.2-4209. Preparation and adoption of regional strategic plan.**

A. Except in planning districts in which regional planning also is conducted by multi-state councils of government, each planning district commission shall prepare a regional strategic plan for the guidance of the district. The plan shall concern those elements which are of importance in more than one of the localities within the district, as distinguished from matters of only local importance. The plan shall include regional goals and objectives, strategies to meet those goals and objectives and mechanisms for measuring progress toward the goals and objectives. The strategic plan shall include those subjects necessary to promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social, and economic elements of the district such as transportation, housing, economic development, and environmental management, *including the impacts from and causes of climate change*. The plan may be divided into parts or sections as the planning district commission deems desirable. In developing the regional strategic plan, the planning district commission shall seek input from a wide range of organizations in the region, including local governing bodies, the business community and citizen organizations.

B. In planning districts in which regional planning also is conducted by multi-state councils of government, each planning district commission may prepare a regional strategic plan for the guidance of the district. If prepared in accordance with this section, such plan shall conform with the requirements of subsection A and also shall include references to the relevant provisions of the most current regional

183 strategic plan prepared by the multi-state council of governments that includes any of the area  
184 comprising the planning district.

185 C. Before the strategic plan is adopted, it shall be submitted to the Department of Housing and  
186 Community Development and to the governing body of each locality within the district for a period of  
187 not less than thirty days prior to a hearing to be held by the planning district commission thereon, after  
188 notice as provided in § 15.2-2204. Each such local governing body shall make recommendations to the  
189 planning district commission on or before the date of the hearing with respect to the effect of the plan  
190 within its locality. The Department of Housing and Community Development shall notify the planning  
191 district commission prior to the hearing as to whether the proposed strategic plan conflicts with plans of  
192 adjacent planning districts.

193 D. Upon approval of the strategic plan by a planning district commission after a public hearing, it  
194 shall be submitted to the governing body of each locality (excluding towns of less than 3,500 population  
195 unless members of the commission) within the district for review and possible adoption. The plan shall  
196 become effective with respect to all action of a planning district commission upon approval by the  
197 planning district commission. The plan shall not become effective with respect to the action of the  
198 governing body of any locality within the district until adopted by the governing body of such locality.

199 E. The adopted strategic plan shall be submitted within thirty days of adoption to the Department of  
200 Housing and Community Development for information and coordination purposes.