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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled December 30, 2019

Requesting the railroad companies having information about coal dust blown from moving trains in the Commonwealth to continue to submit annual reports to the General Assembly.

Patron—Lindsey

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 1992, the General Assembly established the Joint Subcommittee Studying Measures to Reduce Emissions from Coal-Carrying Railroad Cars (the Joint Subcommittee) in response to complaints of blowing coal dust by residents and businesses close to certain railroad lines; and

WHEREAS, in response to the work of the Joint Subcommittee, the affected railroad companies, in cooperation with the coal companies whose products they transport, were able to identify and employ techniques and technologies that have significantly reduced the amount of coal dust blown from moving trains; and

WHEREAS, although the Joint Subcommittee did not find legislative action by the General Assembly in this area to be either necessary or desirable at the present time, it is highly desirable that the General Assembly be kept abreast of actions by railroad companies and coal producers that may affect the amount of coal dust blown from moving trains, so that timely action may be taken if such should prove necessary or desirable in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Senate and House of Delegates passed SJ 257 during the 1997 Regular Session of the General Assembly, affirming the above statements; and

WHEREAS, over 20 years after such prior resolution was passed, the problem with coal dust blown from moving trains still has not been resolved; and

WHEREAS, residents in the Commonwealth are still suffering from coal dust blown from railroad cars and, consequently, a threatened quality of life, and businesses are also being adversely affected; and

WHEREAS, reports indicate that the benefits of covering rail cars carrying coal dust and coal ash outweigh the costs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the railroad companies having information about coal dust blown from moving trains in the Commonwealth be requested to continue to submit annual reports to the General Assembly. Such reports are requested to be filed with the Clerks of the House of Delegates and Senate and should include information for the preceding calendar year on actions and activities having or likely to have an impact on coal dust blown from trains operating in or through the Commonwealth, including annual citizen input meetings in Roanoke, Richmond, Salem, and Norfolk; a cost-benefit analysis of covering rail cars carrying coal; a cost-benefit analysis of enclosing with a dust suppression system the twin rotary dumpsters in Norfolk; publication of the Dust Information Telephone Line via social media, newspaper, and on the sides of rail cars in a size and font that can be seen at a reasonable distance; and reporting on the number, frequency, and location of complaints from the public about coal dust blown from trains; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the registered agent of the Norfolk Southern Corporation with a request that he forward copies of this resolution to coal producers so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

INTRODUCED

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