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SENATE BILL NO. 679

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 62.1-256.2, relating to the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee established.

Patron—Mason

Referred to Committee on Rules

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 62.1-256.2 as follows:****§ 62.1-256.2. Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee established.**

A. The Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee (the Committee) is hereby established as an advisory committee to assist the State Water Commission and the Department in developing, revising, and implementing a management strategy for groundwater in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Department and shall be composed of nonlegislative citizen members consisting of representatives of industrial and municipal water users, representatives of public and private water providers, developers and representatives from the economic development community, representatives of agricultural, conservation, and environmental organizations, state and federal agency officials, and university faculty and citizens with expertise in water resources-related issues. The Committee shall meet at least four times each calendar year.

Members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for their service and shall not be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

B. The Committee shall examine (i) options for developing long-term alternative water sources, including water reclamation and reuse, groundwater recharge, desalination, and surface water options, including creation of storage reservoirs; (ii) the interaction between the Department's groundwater management programs and local and regional water supply plans within the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area for purposes of determining water demand and possible solutions for meeting that demand; (iii) potential funding options both for study and for implementation of management options; (iv) alternative management structures, such as a water resource trading program, formation of a long-term groundwater management committee, and formation of a commission; (v) additional data needed to more fully assess aquifer health and sustainable groundwater management strategies; (vi) potential future groundwater permitting criteria; and (vii) other policies and procedures that the Director of the Department determines may enhance the effectiveness of groundwater management in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. The Committee shall develop specific statutory, budgetary, and regulatory recommendations, as necessary, to implement its recommendations.

C. The Committee shall annually report the results of its examinations and related recommendations to the State Water Commission and the Director of the Department no later than August 1 of each year. The Director of the Department shall issue a report responding to the Committee's recommendations and submit such report to the Governor, the State Water Commission, the Chairmen of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission no later than November 1 of each year.

INTRODUCED

SB679