

2020 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

20200297D

SENATE BILL NO. 5077

Offered August 18, 2020

Prefiled August 17, 2020

A BILL to amend and reenact § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia, relating to emergency laws; powers and duties of Governor.

Patrons—Stanley and Ruff

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 44-146.17. Powers and duties of Governor.

The Governor shall be Director of Emergency Management. He shall take such action from time to time as is necessary for the adequate promotion and coordination of state and local emergency services activities relating to the safety and welfare of the Commonwealth in time of disasters.

The Governor shall have, in addition to his powers hereinafter or elsewhere prescribed by law, the following powers and duties:

(1) To proclaim and publish such rules and regulations and to issue such orders as may, in his judgment, be necessary to accomplish the purposes of this chapter including, but not limited to such measures as are in his judgment and required to control, restrict, allocate, or regulate the use, sale, production, and distribution of food, fuel, clothing and other commodities, materials, goods, services, and resources under any state or federal emergency services programs.

He may adopt and implement the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan, which provides for state-level emergency operations in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency affecting Virginia and that provides the needed framework within which more detailed emergency plans and procedures can be developed and maintained by state agencies, local governments and other organizations.

He may direct and compel evacuation of all or part of the populace from any stricken or threatened area if this action is deemed necessary for the preservation of life, implement emergency mitigation, preparedness, response or recovery actions; prescribe routes, modes of transportation and destination in connection with evacuation; and control ingress and egress at an emergency area, including the movement of persons within the area and the occupancy of premises therein.

Executive orders, to include those declaring a state of emergency and directing evacuation, shall have the force and effect of law and the violation thereof shall be punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor in every case where the executive order declares that its violation shall have such force and effect.

Such executive orders declaring a state of emergency may address exceptional circumstances that exist relating solely to an order of quarantine or an order of isolation concerning a communicable disease of public health threat that is issued by the State Health Commissioner for an affected area of the Commonwealth pursuant to Article 3.02 (§ 32.1-48.05 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of Title 32.1.

An executive order issued under this statute shall not force the closing of any business, or any category of business or industry, either temporarily or permanently, unless (i) an order of quarantine or an order of isolation concerning a communicable disease of public health threat has been issued by the State Health Commissioner for an affected area of the Commonwealth pursuant to Article 3.02 (§ 32.1-48.05 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of Title 32.1 and (ii) the State Health Commissioner or his legal representative, as soon as practicable following the issuance of any such order, has filed a petition seeking an ex parte court review and confirmation of the legality of the exercise of such authority.

Except as to emergency plans issued to prescribe actions to be taken in the event of natural disasters and emergencies, no rule, regulation, or order issued under this section shall have any effect beyond June 30 next following the convening of the next adjournment of the regular session of the General Assembly but the same or a similar rule, regulation, or order may thereafter be issued again after the adjournment of that regular session of the General Assembly, if not contrary to law;

(2) To appoint a State Coordinator of Emergency Management and authorize the appointment or employment of other personnel as is necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter, and to remove, in his discretion, any and all persons serving hereunder;

(3) To procure supplies and equipment, to institute training and public information programs relative to emergency management and to take other preparatory steps including the partial or full mobilization of emergency management organizations in advance of actual disaster, to insure the furnishing of adequately trained and equipped forces in time of need;

INTRODUCED

SB5077

59 (4) To make such studies and surveys of industries, resources, and facilities in the Commonwealth as
60 may be necessary to ascertain the capabilities of the Commonwealth and to plan for the most efficient
61 emergency use thereof;

62 (5) On behalf of the Commonwealth enter into mutual aid arrangements with other states and to
63 coordinate mutual aid plans between political subdivisions of the Commonwealth. After a state of
64 emergency is declared in another state and the Governor receives a written request for assistance from
65 the executive authority of that state, the Governor may authorize the use in the other state of personnel,
66 equipment, supplies, and materials of the Commonwealth, or of a political subdivision, with the consent
67 of the chief executive officer or governing body of the political subdivision;

68 (6) To delegate any administrative authority vested in him under this chapter, and to provide for the
69 further delegation of any such authority, as needed;

70 (7) Whenever, in the opinion of the Governor, the safety and welfare of the people of the
71 Commonwealth require the exercise of emergency measures due to a threatened or actual disaster, he
72 may declare a state of emergency to exist;

73 (8) To request a major disaster declaration from the President, thereby certifying the need for federal
74 disaster assistance and ensuring the expenditure of a reasonable amount of funds of the Commonwealth,
75 its local governments, or other agencies for alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering resulting
76 from the disaster;

77 (9) To provide incident command system guidelines for state agencies and local emergency response
78 organizations; and

79 (10) Whenever, in the opinion of the Governor or his designee, an employee of a state or local
80 public safety agency responding to a disaster has suffered an extreme personal or family hardship in the
81 affected area, such as the destruction of a personal residence or the existence of living conditions that
82 imperil the health and safety of an immediate family member of the employee, the Governor may direct
83 the Comptroller of the Commonwealth to issue warrants not to exceed \$2,500 per month, for up to three
84 calendar months, to the employee to assist the employee with the hardship.