

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

CHAPTER 504

An Act to establish the Carbon Sequestration Task Force; report.

[S 1374]

Approved March 31, 2021

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1 A. *The Secretary of Natural Resources shall, jointly with the Secretary of Agriculture and Consumer Services, convene a task force for the purpose of studying carbon sequestration in the Commonwealth.*

B. The task force shall be composed of the Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of Agriculture and Consumer Services; the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality or his designee; the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation or his designee; the Director of the Department of Wildlife Resources or his designee; the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services or his designee; the Virginia State Forester or his designee; the Marine Resources Commissioner or his designee; technical experts from the University of Virginia, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, and Virginia State University; a representative from each of the Virginia Farm Bureau, the Virginia Agribusiness Council, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Virginia Forestry Association, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Shellfish Growers of Virginia, and the Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations; and other technical experts, as needed. The Secretary of Natural Resources and the Secretary of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall serve as co-chairs of the task force.

C. The task force shall (i) consider possible methods of increasing carbon sequestration within the natural environment through state land and marine resources use policies; agricultural, aquacultural, and silvicultural practices; and other practices to achieve natural resources restoration and long-term conservation; (ii) recommend short-term and long-term benchmarks for increasing carbon sequestration; (iii) develop a standardized methodology to establish baseline carbon levels and account for increases in carbon sequestration over time; (iv) identify existing carbon markets and considerations relevant to potential participation by the Commonwealth; and (v) identify other potential funding mechanisms to encourage carbon sequestration practices in the Commonwealth.

D. The task force shall, before the first day of the 2022 Session of the General Assembly, submit a report of its findings to the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources.