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SENATE BILL NO. 286

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns
on March 4, 2022)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Ebbin)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 55.1-703 of the Code of Virginia, relating to required disclosure for buyer to beware; buyer due diligence; historic districts.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 55.1-703 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 55.1-703. Required disclosures for buyer to beware; buyer to exercise necessary due diligence.

A. The owner of the residential real property shall furnish to a purchaser a residential property disclosure statement for the buyer to beware of certain matters that may affect the buyer's decision to purchase such real property. Such statement shall be provided by the Real Estate Board on its website.

B. The residential property disclosure statement provided by the Real Estate Board on its website shall include the following:

1. The owner makes no representations or warranties as to the condition of the real property or any improvements thereon, or with regard to any covenants and restrictions, or any conveyances of mineral rights, as may be recorded among the land records affecting the real property or any improvements thereon, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary, including obtaining a home inspection, as defined in § 54.1-500, a mold assessment conducted by a business that follows the guidelines provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and a residential building energy analysis, as defined in § 54.1-1144, in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

2. The owner makes no representations with respect to any matters that may pertain to parcels adjacent to the subject parcel, including zoning classification or permitted uses of adjacent parcels, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary with respect to adjacent parcels in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

3. The owner makes no representations to any matters that pertain to whether the provisions of any historic district ordinance affect the property, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary with respect to any historic district designated by the locality pursuant to § 15.2-2306, including review of (i) any local ordinance creating such district, (ii) any official map adopted by the locality depicting historic districts, and (iii) a survey of the property, and (iv) any materials available from the locality that explain (a) any requirements to alter, reconstruct, renovate, restore, or demolish buildings or signs in the local historic district and (b) the necessity of any local review board or governing body approvals prior to doing any work on a property located in a local historic district, in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

4. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property contains any resource protection areas established in an ordinance implementing the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (§ 62.1-44.15:67 et seq.) adopted by the locality where the property is located pursuant to § 62.1-44.15:74, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary to determine whether the provisions of any such ordinance affect the property, including review of any official map adopted by the locality depicting resource protection areas, in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

5. The owner makes no representations with respect to information on any sexual offenders registered under Chapter 23 (§ 19.2-387 et seq.) of Title 19.2, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence they deem necessary with respect to such information, in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

6. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is within a dam break inundation zone. Such disclosure statement shall advise purchasers to exercise whatever due diligence they deem necessary with respect to whether the property resides within a dam break inundation zone, including a review of any map adopted by the locality depicting dam break inundation zones;

7. The owner makes no representations with respect to the presence of any wastewater system, including the type or size of the wastewater system or associated maintenance responsibilities related to the wastewater system, located on the property, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due

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60 diligence they deem necessary to determine the presence of any wastewater system on the property and
61 the costs associated with maintaining, repairing, or inspecting any wastewater system, including any
62 costs or requirements related to the pump-out of septic tanks, in accordance with terms and conditions as
63 may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to
64 such contract;

65 8. The owner makes no representations with respect to any right to install or use solar energy
66 collection devices on the property;

67 9. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is located in one or
68 more special flood hazard areas, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence they
69 deem necessary, including (i) obtaining a flood certification or mortgage lender determination of whether
70 the property is located in one or more special flood hazard areas, (ii) reviewing any map depicting
71 special flood hazard areas, (iii) contacting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or
72 visiting the website for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program or the Virginia Flood Risk
73 Information website operated by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and (iv) determining
74 whether flood insurance is required, in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the
75 real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract. A flood risk
76 information form, pursuant to the provisions of subsection D, that provides additional information on
77 flood risk and flood insurance is available for download by the Real Estate Board on its website;

78 10. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is subject to one or
79 more conservation or other easements, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence a
80 particular purchaser deems necessary in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in
81 the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

82 11. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is subject to a
83 community development authority approved by a local governing body pursuant to Article 6
84 (§ 15.2-5152 et seq.) of Chapter 51 of Title 15.2, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due
85 diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary in accordance with terms and conditions as may be
86 contained in the real estate purchase contract, including determining whether a copy of the resolution or
87 ordinance has been recorded in the land records of the circuit court for the locality in which the
88 community development authority district is located for each tax parcel included in the district pursuant
89 to § 15.2-5157, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

90 12. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is located on or near
91 deposits of marine clays (marumsco soils), and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due
92 diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary in accordance with terms and conditions as may be
93 contained in the real estate purchase contract, including consulting public resources regarding local soil
94 conditions and having the soil and structural conditions of the property analyzed by a qualified
95 professional;

96 13. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property is located in a locality
97 classified as Zone 1 or Zone 2 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Map of Radon
98 Zones, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence they deem necessary to determine
99 whether the property is located in such a zone, including (i) reviewing the EPA's Map of Radon Zones
100 or visiting the EPA's radon information website; (ii) visiting the Virginia Department of Health's Indoor
101 Radon Program website; (iii) visiting the National Radon Proficiency Program's website; (iv) visiting the
102 National Radon Safety Board's website that lists the Board's certified contractors; and (v) ordering a
103 radon inspection, in accordance with the terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate
104 purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

105 14. The owner makes no representations with respect to whether the property contains any pipe, pipe
106 or plumbing fitting, fixture, solder, or flux that does not meet the federal Safe Drinking Water Act
107 definition of "lead free" pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300g-6, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever
108 due diligence they deem necessary to determine whether the property contains any pipe, pipe or
109 plumbing fitting, fixture, solder, or flux that does not meet the federal Safe Drinking Water Act
110 definition of "lead free," in accordance with terms and conditions as may be contained in the real estate
111 purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to such contract;

112 15. The owner makes no representations with respect to the existence of defective drywall on the
113 property, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due diligence they deem necessary to
114 determine whether there is defective drywall on the property, in accordance with terms and conditions as
115 may be contained in the real estate purchase contract, but in any event prior to settlement pursuant to
116 such contract. For purposes of this subdivision, "defective drywall" means the same as that term is
117 defined in § 36-156.1; and

118 16. The owner makes no representation with respect to the condition or regulatory status of any
119 impounding structure or dam on the property or under the ownership of the common interest community
120 that the owner of the property is required to join, and purchasers are advised to exercise whatever due
121 diligence a particular purchaser deems necessary to determine the condition, regulatory status, cost of

122 required maintenance and operation, or other relevant information pertaining to the impounding structure
123 or dam, including contacting the Department of Conservation and Recreation or a licensed professional
124 engineer.

125 C. The residential property disclosure statement shall be delivered in accordance with § 55.1-709.

126 D. The Real Estate Board shall make available on its website a flood risk information form. Such
127 form shall be substantially as follows:

128 Flood Risk Information Form

129 The purpose of this information form is to provide property owners and potential property owners
130 with information regarding flood risk. This information form does not determine whether a property
131 owner will be required to purchase a flood insurance policy. That determination is made by the lender
132 providing a loan for the property at the lender's discretion.

133 Mortgage lenders are mandated under the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and the National
134 Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 to require the purchase of flood insurance by property owners who
135 acquire loans from federally regulated, supervised, or insured financial institutions for the acquisition or
136 improvement of land, facilities, or structures located within or to be located within a Special Flood
137 Hazard Area. A Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is a high-risk area defined as any land that would
138 be inundated by a flood, also known as a base flood, having a one percent chance of occurring in a
139 given year. The lender reviews the current National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps for the
140 community in which the property is located to determine its location relative to the published SFHA and
141 completes the Standard Flood Hazard Determination Form (SFHDF), created by the Federal Emergency
142 Management Agency (FEMA). If the lender determines that the structure is indeed located within a
143 SFHA and the community is participating in the NFIP, the borrower is then notified that flood insurance
144 will be required as a condition of receiving the loan. A similar review and notification are completed
145 whenever a loan is sold on the secondary loan market or when the lender completes a routine review of
146 its mortgage portfolio.

147 Properties that are not located in a SFHA can still flood. Flood damage is not generally covered by a
148 standard home insurance policy. It is prudent to consider purchasing flood insurance even when flood
149 insurance is not required by a lender. Properties not located in a SFHA may be eligible for a low-cost
150 preferred risk flood insurance policy. Property owners and buyers are encouraged to consult with their
151 insurance agent about flood insurance.

152 What is a flood? A flood is a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of
153 two or more acres of normally dry land area or of two or more properties, at least one of which is the
154 policyholder's property, from (i) overflow of inland or tidal waters, (ii) unusual and rapid accumulation
155 or runoff of surface waters from any source, (iii) mudflow, or (iv) collapse or subsidence of land along
156 the shore of a lake or similar body of water as a result of erosion or undermining caused by waves or
157 currents of water exceeding anticipated cyclical levels that result in a flood.

158 FEMA is required to update Flood Maps every five years. Flood zones for this property may change
159 due to periodic map updates. To determine what flood zone or zones a property is located in a buyer
160 can visit the website for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program or the Virginia Department of
161 Conservation and Recreation's Flood Risk Information System website.