

1996 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 173

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) to study the organization of state agencies and their functions within the Commonwealth's Natural Resources Secretariat.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1996

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 1996

WHEREAS, the Executive Budget for 1996 to 1998 proposes a number of changes in the location of responsibility and authority for certain programs or functions performed by state agencies in the Natural Resources Secretariat; and

WHEREAS, the transfer or consolidation of programs that is proposed in that budget will impact several agencies, including the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department, and the Department of Environmental Quality, and may impact the services received by citizens or taxpayers from these agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth needs to continually strive for the most efficient and effective organization and performance of its agencies; and

WHEREAS, the functional area of natural resources is among those scheduled for review by JLARC pursuant to the Legislative Program Review and Evaluation Act (§ 30-64 et seq.) through Senate Joint Resolution No. 262 (1995); and

WHEREAS, JLARC is currently charged with reviewing consolidation issues pertaining to the services of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Marine Resources Commission, and related agencies the Commission might identify; and

WHEREAS, JLARC is also conducting a review of the Department of Environmental Quality pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 531 (1995); and

WHEREAS, information obtained in these JLARC reviews are expected to be relevant to several of the transfers or consolidations of agency functions that have been proposed; and

WHEREAS, JLARC could be requested to incorporate relevant findings from these reviews into a comprehensive review of the organization of the various agencies and agency functions in the Natural Resources Secretariat, thereby providing the General Assembly with a systematic assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of current organizational arrangements as well as various options and alternatives for potential improvement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the organization of state agencies and their functions within the Commonwealth's Natural Resources Secretariat. The study shall include (i) a review of existing divisions of responsibility and authority among these state agencies, so as to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of current agency structures within the Secretariat; and (ii) a consideration of various options or alternatives for changing existing divisions of responsibility and authority of these state agencies, including, but not limited to, consolidations of agencies or consolidations of certain functions of these agencies. To the extent that the review indicates that certain functions of these agencies might be privatized or eliminated, or might be redundant with functions performed by agencies outside of the Natural Resources Secretariat, those circumstances or opportunities should also be identified.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to JLARC, upon request.

The Commission shall report on its progress to the 1997 Session of the General Assembly and to succeeding sessions until its work is completed.

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