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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 537

House Amendments in [] — January 31, 1997

[*Memorializing the USDA to favorably consider a proposal before its Fund for Rural America program by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the National Center for Resource Innovations—Chesapeake, that will assist in developing an essential environmental information system that will help the Commonwealth in making sound decisions for the future of Virginia's communities and environment, and urging NASA and the USDA to work together in this effort. Memorializing the United States Department of Agriculture to adopt a proposal by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the National Center for Resource Innovations—Chesapeake, Inc., to the Fund for Rural America Program to assist Virginia in developing an environmental information system.*]

Patrons—Plum and Murphy

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, information resources, innovations, coordination, and cooperative programs are essential to providing for the future of Virginia's communities and environment; and

WHEREAS, Congress has established a new program known as the Fund for Rural America through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the broad purpose of which is to support communities, to include economic development together with innovative environmental stewardship, while enhancing agricultural profitability, efficiency, and international competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, new kinds of partnerships are envisioned to meet these objectives, including partnerships among federal and state agencies, and non-profit and private organizations with demonstrated histories of success in technology development; and

WHEREAS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA, together with Virginia's 46 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, has developed a 50-year working history of partnering with private land owners, local governments and others to deliver information, conservation technologies and education for protecting, restoring and enhancing soil, water and related resources; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Resource Innovations - Chesapeake, Inc., (NCRI) is a unique, non-profit, private Virginia corporation funded by Congress through the USDA that has built and continues to build cooperative, collaborative and innovative environmental and agricultural information systems for decision-makers, including information systems suited to the broad diversity of Virginia's physiography, resource use and communities; and

WHEREAS, NRCS, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and NCRI have decided to work together to develop and deliver, with additional appropriate partners, an environmental information system that meets the present and future needs of the Commonwealth, with deliverable products contingent on adequate funding and staffing levels; and

WHEREAS, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has been developing high-capacity computer systems, visualization techniques and new technologies, including remote sensing for land cover and land use change research and applications, seasonal climate variability and prediction, and natural hazards research and applications that characterize land, water and other natural systems and processes as they interrelate with farm systems, water quality and ecosystem health; now, therefore, be it

[**RESOLVED**, by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the USDA be urged to favorably consider a proposal under the Fund for Rural America by NRCS, Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and NCRI, to assist Virginia in developing the necessary environmental information system to assist the Commonwealth in making sound decisions based on effective socio-economic and agri-environmental analyses to effect a secure future for its environment; and, be it **RESOLVED**, by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the United States Department of Agriculture be urged to adopt a proposal by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the National Center for Resource Innovations—Chesapeake, Inc., to the Fund for Rural America Program to assist Virginia in developing an environmental information system. Such proposal will assist Virginia in making sound decisions based on effective socio-economic and agri-environmental analyses to effect a secure future for its environment; and, be it]

RESOLVED FURTHER, That NASA and the USDA be urged to work together to assist Virginia, NRCS, Virginia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and NCRI in this unique effort; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the administrators of the USDA and NASA to apprise them of the sense of the

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60 Virginia General Assembly.