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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 587

Offered January 20, 1997

Requesting the Departments of Environmental Quality and Health to study examples of water reuse and conservation programs in the United States and to examine any documented adverse health impacts from such programs in order to determine if similar programs could be implemented in Virginia.

Patrons—Ruff, Albo, Behm, Bloxom, Bryant, Callahan, Christian, Cooper, Councill, Cox, Darner, Davies, Deeds, Drake, Dudley, Forbes, Griffith, Guest, Howell, Ingram, Johnson, Katzen, Kilgore, Landes, Lovelace, May, McClure, McDonnell, Mims, Moran, Morgan, Murphy, Nelms, Nixon, O'Brien, Parrish, Phillips, Reid, Rhodes, Sherwood, Shuler, Tata, Van Yahres, Wardrup and Way; Senators: Benedetti, Colgan, Couric, Saslaw, Ticer, Waddell, Whipple and Woods

Referred to Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources

WHEREAS, the long-term ecological and economic interests of Virginia compel the Commonwealth to examine the capacity of water supply and sewage treatment facilities, the growing problems associated with stormwater runoff, and the potential gains to be realized from encouraging water conservation and reuse whenever feasible; and

WHEREAS, population growth and economic development will place increasing demands on water supplies and on treatment and stormwater management capacities for the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, water systems across Virginia are experiencing water treatment and supply capacity constraints; and

WHEREAS, these areas include some of the Commonwealth's poorest localities in Southwest Virginia and on the Eastern Shore and some of its most populous cities such as Virginia Beach and Newport News; and

WHEREAS, the term "gray water" is used to refer to waste water other than sewage water from toilets and other problematic wastes; and

WHEREAS, rain water collection and gray water reuse can provide multiple water conservation benefits through decreased demands on public treatment and supply infrastructures; and

WHEREAS, rain water and gray water reuse may help reclaim otherwise wasted nutrients and reduce nutrient discharges and turbidity problems in Virginia's waterways; and

WHEREAS, state and local governments in some areas of the United States have found feasible methods for reusing gray water to reduce fresh water consumption and diminish sewage infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, rain collection and gray water reuse encourage water conservation and environmental awareness; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth wishes to protect public health, promote wise use of its natural resources, increase voluntary participation of its citizens in conservation activities, and encourage innovation in the management of its natural resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Departments of Environmental Quality and Health, with input from local governments and concerned citizens, be requested to study examples of water reuse and conservation programs in the United States and to examine any documented adverse health impacts from such programs in order to determine if similar programs could be implemented in Virginia. The study shall: (i) evaluate experiences of state and local governments which have developed procedures, parameters, and programs encouraging the reuse of gray water and the collection of rainwater, (ii) evaluate any documented information on adverse health impacts experienced from gray water reuse, (iii) develop guidelines for appropriate gray water reuse in the Commonwealth, and (iv) make recommendations on incentives to encourage rainwater collection and gray water reuse among appropriately targeted audiences.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Departments of Environmental Quality and Health for this study, upon request.

The Departments of Environmental Quality and Health shall complete their work in time to submit their findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

INTRODUCED

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