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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 270

Offered January 16, 1997

Continuing the special study panel on the Rappahannock River Basin.

Patrons—Houck, Bolling, Chichester, Couric and Miller, K.G.; Delegates: Davies, Dickinson, Howell, Katzen, Morgan, Murphy and Orrock

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the 1996 Session of the General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution 92 establishing a special study panel to examine, evaluate and make recommendations for the potential structures and goals of a mechanism to address coordination, communication and strategic planning on issues of basin-wide significance in the Rappahannock River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the panel, composed of representatives of the basin's local governments and members of the General Assembly, met at locations throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, the panel examined, discussed and compiled information on a wide variety of topics including: (i) uses made of the river; (ii) concerns regarding the current and future condition of the river and threats to the health and uses of the river; (iii) efforts made to address concerns about the river; (iv) the economy, demographics and growth in each of the four planning district commissions found in the basin; (v) numerous laws impacting the river and its resources; (vi) a number of previous studies conducted on the river and basin; (vii) examples of communication, coordination and planning efforts at the sub-basin level; and (viii) the economic importance of the river to each of the basin's localities; and

WHEREAS, the existence of the study panel has heightened awareness of the mutual as well as divergent interests in the river and has been invaluable in increasing communication and understanding among all parties; and

WHEREAS, at a public hearing held by the panel, citizens from throughout the basin presented a clear message in favor of protecting the river and providing for basin-wide communication, coordination and planning; and

WHEREAS, panel members believe that some form of a continuing basin-wide structure should be established to facilitate communication, coordination and planning for the basin; and

WHEREAS, the panel members have begun examination of the elements for inclusion in such a basin-wide structure but, due to the complexity of the issues and time constraints, have not been able to complete their discussions; and

WHEREAS, the panel members agree that the current panel should continue its work for one more year so that it may make recommendations on such a structure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the special study panel on the Rappahannock River Basin be continued to develop potential structures and goals for a mechanism to address coordination, communication and strategic planning on issues of basin-wide significance to the Rappahannock River Basin. The panel shall consider appropriate roles in such a mechanism for soil and water conservation districts. The members duly appointed pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 92 (1996) shall continue to serve, except that any vacancies shall be filled as provided in the enabling resolution. Staffing shall continue to be provided by the Division of Legislative Services and technical and logistical assistance shall be provided by the planning district commissions encompassing the Rappahannock River Basin and the local governing bodies represented by the panel.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the special study panel, upon request.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$11,800. Other expenses associated with the study of regional issues facing the Rappahannock River Basin shall be funded from such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose.

The special study panel shall complete its work in time to submit its 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.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

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