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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 275

Offered January 16, 1997

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the structural condition and the costs of maintaining dams owned by soil and water conservation districts.*

Patrons—Hanger, Holland, Houck, Miller, K.G. and Reynolds; Delegates: Abbitt, Bennett, Davies, Dickinson and Wilkins

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, soil and water conservation districts throughout the Commonwealth are responsible for the operation and maintenance of 103 district-owned dams; and

WHEREAS, these dams range in age from 2 to 46 years; and

WHEREAS, the dams were built primarily with funds provided to Virginia by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, they were typically designed to have a life expectancy of 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the dams are an essential part of Virginia's vital infrastructure, serving to mitigate floods and protect life, property, river ecosystems, and productive agricultural and forestry resources; and

WHEREAS, previous examinations by dam inspectors have documented problems with deteriorating concrete risers and pipes and frozen gate valves; and

WHEREAS, many of the dams are classified as Class 1 dams, meaning if they were to fail there would likely be loss of life; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth does not provide additional funding to soil and water conservation districts for the regular maintenance, repair, or modification of district-owned dams; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the structural condition and the costs of maintaining dams owned by soil and water conservation districts. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of seven members as follows: two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; three members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one citizen member who is a director of a soil and water conservation district that owns a dam to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and one citizen member who is a director of a soil and water conservation district that owns a dam to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall evaluate (i) the integrity of these structures and the risk to the health, safety, and welfare of the public; (ii) the infrastructure needs and maintenance and repair costs of the dams; (iii) the need for integrated flow and observation warning systems (IFLOWS); and (iv) the design of each of these dams to determine whether they are adequate to meet changing land use patterns in the watershed.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$4,600.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Emergency Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee 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.

INTRODUCED

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