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SENATE BILL NO. 570

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Local Government
on February 10, 1998)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Saslaw)

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-2307 of the Code of Virginia, relating to zoning.***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 15.2-2307 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 15.2-2307. Vested rights not impaired; nonconforming uses.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize the impairment of any vested right, ~~except that~~. Without limiting the time when rights might otherwise vest, and notwithstanding anything in this chapter to the contrary, a landowner's rights shall be deemed vested in a land use and such vesting shall not be affected by a subsequent amendment to a zoning ordinance when the landowner (i) obtains or is the beneficiary of an affirmative governmental act allowing development of a specific project, (ii) relies in good faith on the affirmative governmental act, and (iii) incurs extensive obligations or expenses in diligent pursuit of the specific project which is the subject of the affirmative governmental act.

For purposes of this section and without limitation, the following are deemed to be affirmative governmental acts: (i) the governing body has accepted proffers or proffered conditions which specify use related to a zoning amendment; (ii) the governing body has approved an application for a rezoning for a specific use or density; (iii) the governing body or board of zoning appeals has granted a special exception or use permit with conditions; (iv) the board of zoning appeals has approved a variance; (v) the governing body or its designated agent has approved a preliminary subdivision plat, site plan or plan of development for the landowner's property and the applicant diligently pursues approval of the final plat or plan within a reasonable period of time under the circumstances; or (vi) the governing body or its designated agent has approved a final subdivision plat, site plan or plan of development for the landowner's property.

A zoning ordinance may provide that land, buildings, and structures and the uses thereof which do not conform to the zoning prescribed for the district in which they are situated may be continued only so long as the then existing or a more restricted use continues and such use is not discontinued for more than two years, and so long as the buildings or structures are maintained in their then structural condition; and that the uses of such buildings or structures shall conform to such regulations whenever they are enlarged, extended, reconstructed or structurally altered and may further provide that no nonconforming building or structure may be moved on the same lot or to any other lot which is not properly zoned to permit such nonconforming use.

2. That without prejudice to rights which might otherwise be vested, the provisions of this act shall apply to affirmative governmental acts that occur after the effective date of this act.