

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA -- 1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 505

*Expressing the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia that communities across the Commonwealth be supported in their efforts to become "Year 2000 compliant" and be encouraged, as part of their contingency planning for the century date change, to prepare to provide emergency and public safety services in the time before, during, and after January 1, 2000.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 1999

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 1999

WHEREAS, state and local governments have a shared responsibility to provide certain emergency and public safety services for and on behalf of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the transition to the new millenium on January 1, 2000, is an exciting event and much is being done, and will continue to be done, to modify software programs, computers, and infrastructure systems to make this transition smooth; and

WHEREAS, despite everyone's best efforts, some unintended and unforeseen difficulties may be encountered due to interruptions in systems which provide essential services such as telecommunications, water, electricity, and information technology and retrieval; and

WHEREAS, such unintended, unforeseen, and temporary difficulties could occur in more than one essential system at the same time; and

WHEREAS, such unintended, unforeseen, and temporary difficulties could result in the disruption of one or more of the emergency or public safety systems now provided by the Commonwealth to its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross maintains a website on the Internet devoted to safety and Year 2000 disaster services, views the preparation for the transition to the new millenium as similar to the preparation for a natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood, and suggests that a disaster assistance plan be prepared and provided for as a method of contingency planning for the Year 2000; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties has published findings which show that approximately half of the 3,069 counties in the United States do not have strategic plans to deal with potential computer failures which impact emergency 911 systems, and because of budgetary constraints, these emergency 911 systems may not be prepared by the Year 2000; and

WHEREAS, nations such as Australia and Canada have alerted their Militia, National Guard, and Royal Mounted Police to be ready to provide emergency and public safety services in the time before, during, and after January 1, 2000; and

WHEREAS, through a conference dealing with Year 2000 global compliance, the United Nations has alerted its membership to consider contingency planning for human services; and

WHEREAS, while the Commonwealth is in partnership with several neighboring states to come to the assistance of those within the partnership, the states within the partnership may not be able to assist the Commonwealth in its time of need due to their own system failures; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 44-146.17 of the Code of Virginia, His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, is designated the Director of Emergency Services and is vested with power to "take such action from time to time as is necessary for the adequate promotion and coordination of state and local civilian activities relating to the safety and welfare of the Commonwealth in time of natural or man-made disasters"; and

WHEREAS, the Governor may invoke the powers vested in him pursuant to § 44-146.17 by proclaiming and publishing such rules, regulations, and executive orders as may, in his judgment, be necessary to accomplish the purposes of his role as Director of Emergency Services; and

WHEREAS, the invocation of such powers by the Governor may become necessary to help protect the health, safety, and welfare of Virginia's citizens and to assist communities across the Commonwealth to provide emergency and public safety services in the time before, during, and after January 1, 2000; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That communities across the Commonwealth be supported in their efforts to become "Year 2000 compliant" and be encouraged, as part of their contingency planning for the century date change, to prepare to provide emergency and public safety services in the time before, during, and after January 1, 2000; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, and the Executive Directors of the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League, that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter.

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