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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 550

Offered January 18, 1999

Proposing an amendment to Section 8 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia, relating to limits on taxes and revenues and the Revenue Stabilization Fund.

Patrons—Cantor, Albo, Armstrong, Baker, Behm, Black, Cox, Davis, Day, Deeds, Drake, Griffith, Hargrove, Harris, Howell, Ingram, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, S.C., Marshall, McClure, McDonnell, McQuigg, Nixon, O'Brien, Parrish, Purkey, Reid, Ruff, Wagner, Wardrup, Ware, Weatherholtz and Wilkins

Referred to Committee on Finance

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, a majority of the members elected to each house agreeing, That the following amendment to the Constitution of Virginia be, and the same hereby is, proposed and referred to the General Assembly at its first regular session held after the next general election of members of the House of Delegates for its concurrence in conformity with the provisions of Section 1 of Article XII of the Constitution of Virginia, namely:

Amend Section 8 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia as follows:

ARTICLE X

TAXATION AND FINANCE

Section 8. Limit of tax or revenue.

No other or greater amount of tax or revenues shall, at any time, be levied than may be required for the necessary expenses of the government, or to pay the indebtedness of the Commonwealth.

The General Assembly shall establish the Revenue Stabilization Fund. The Fund shall consist of an amount not to exceed ten percent of the Commonwealth's average annual tax revenues derived from taxes on income and retail sales as certified by the Auditor of Public Accounts for the three fiscal years immediately preceding. The Auditor of Public Accounts shall compute the ten percent limitation of such fund annually and report to the General Assembly not later than the first day of December. "Certified tax revenues" means the Commonwealth's annual tax revenues derived from taxes on income and retail sales as certified by the Auditor of Public Accounts.

The General Assembly shall make deposits to the Fund to equal at least fifty percent of the product of the certified tax revenues collected in the most recently ended fiscal year times the difference between the annual percentage increase in the certified tax revenues collected for the most recently ended fiscal year and the average annual percentage increase in the certified tax revenues collected in the six fiscal years immediately preceding the most recently ended fiscal year. However, growth in certified tax revenues, which is the result of either increases in tax rates on income or retail sales or the repeal of exemptions therefrom, may be excluded, in whole or in part, from the computation immediately preceding for a period of time not to exceed six calendar years from the calendar year in which such tax rate increase or exemption repeal was effective. Additional appropriations may be made at any time so long as the ten percent limitation established herein is not exceeded. All interest earned on the Fund shall be part thereof; however, if the Fund's balance exceeds the limitation, the amount in excess of the limitation shall be paid into the general fund after appropriation by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly may appropriate an amount for transfer from the Fund to compensate for no more than one-half of the difference between the total general fund revenues appropriated and a revised general fund revenue forecast presented to the General Assembly prior to or during a subsequent regular or special legislative session. However, no transfer shall be made unless the general fund revenues appropriated exceed such revised general fund revenue forecast by more than two percent of certified tax revenues collected in the most recently ended fiscal year. Furthermore, no appropriation or transfer from such fund in any fiscal year shall exceed more than one-half of the balance of the Revenue Stabilization Fund. The General Assembly may enact such laws as may be necessary and appropriate to implement the Fund.

Any surplus funds above the amount required to be deposited to the Fund from the certified tax revenues collected in the most recently ended fiscal year shall be refunded to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. The Auditor of Public Accounts shall compute the amount of the surplus, if any, annually. The General Assembly shall provide by law for the refund of a share of surplus amount to each income taxpayer of the Commonwealth based on the proportion of the taxpayer's share of the year's total income tax revenues of the Commonwealth. Refunds shall be made as provided by law within the six months following the certification of the surplus amount by the Auditor of Public Accounts.

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