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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 161

Offered January 24, 2000

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study karst groundwater monitoring and protection in the Shenandoah Valley.

Patrons—Landes, Deeds, Harris, Louderback, Thomas and Weatherholtz; Senator: Hanger

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, population growth in Virginia is leading to an increasing reliance on groundwater for drinking water supplies; and

WHEREAS, an understanding of interactions between surface water and groundwater is essential to proper management of the quality and quantity of Virginia's groundwater resources; and

WHEREAS, there is very little data available regarding such interactions in areas with karst topography, such as the Shenandoah Valley; and

WHEREAS, one way to ensure that such data are collected and made available to those charged with managing groundwater in the Shenandoah Valley would be to establish a regional groundwater monitoring network; and

WHEREAS, before such a network can be established, many questions must first be answered; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of such a network is vital to the continued growth and development of the Shenandoah Valley and is therefore of interest to all of the region's policy-makers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study karst groundwater monitoring and protection in the Shenandoah Valley. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of seven members, which shall include five legislative members and two nonlegislative citizen as follows: three members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker; two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; one local government official from the Shenandoah Valley to be appointed by the Speaker; and one local government official from the Shenandoah Valley to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In the first year, the joint subcommittee shall study the need for and possible structures of a regional groundwater monitoring network in the Shenandoah Valley, and make recommendations on:

1. Whether such network should be an extension of an existing monitoring program that has been established by a state or local government entity;

2. Criteria for selecting monitoring points;

3. Parameters to be monitored;

4. Monitoring frequency; and

5. Start-up costs and annual funding requirements.

In the second year of the study, the joint subcommittee shall monitor the implementation of its recommendations and shall make recommendations for refining or expanding the monitoring network, if appropriate.

The joint subcommittee may appoint a technical advisory committee consisting of persons with expertise in geology, hydrology or environmental engineering, as the joint subcommittee deems appropriate.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$7,250.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. 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 an interim report to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly and its final findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2002 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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