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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 187

Offered January 24, 2000

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the regulatory responsibilities, policies, and activities of the State Corporation Commission as they relate to successful economic development in the Commonwealth.

Patrons—Cantor, Diamonstein, Hall, Kilgore and Rust; Senator: Norment

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia is entering the twenty-first century while enjoying an unparalleled economic expansion resulting in new opportunities for all Virginians to build a better life for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's prosperity is being fueled by unprecedented technological progress and innovation as we enter the new century with the preponderance of the world's Internet traffic flowing through our Commonwealth and our technology sector increasingly recognized for its national and global leadership; and

WHEREAS, the current expansion of the Commonwealth's economy has fueled revenue growth that has allowed for meaningful relief for taxpayers, enhanced funding for schools and higher education, improvements in health care, expanded efforts to improve our environment, and many other initiatives necessary to improve the quality of life for all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, the continuation of the current expansion of the economy of the Commonwealth is essential to the prosperity of our citizens, to the continued progress in improving our quality of life, and to providing new opportunities for the rising generation; and

WHEREAS, while government should, wherever possible, act to promote the economic prosperity of the citizens of the Commonwealth, government may also have a duty to regulate economic activity in order to protect the health, safety, and security of the citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in fulfilling its duty to protect the health, safety, and security of the citizens of the Commonwealth, government should examine proposed actions and regulations to determine the impact such actions and regulations may have on the economy and, where that impact is negative, to ensure that such actions and regulations have the least negative impact necessary to achieve their goals; and

WHEREAS, all agencies and departments of the executive branch of government are currently required to submit proposed regulation to the Department of Planning and Budget for a review of the impact such proposed regulations would have on the economy and, where that impact is negative, an assessment of whether alternative approaches could achieve the same goals with a less negative impact; and

WHEREAS, the State Corporation Commission remains the one department of government for which no external assessment has been made of the impact its actions have had on the economy or whether alternative approaches would have allowed the Commission to achieve its legitimate goals while having less impact on the economy; and

WHEREAS, many of the industries in the process of restructuring are advancing new technologies and innovations, such as the Internet, which are vital to the continued economic growth, expansion, and well-being of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the State Corporation Commission's activities regarding the restructuring and deregulation of industry are occurring without any external assessment of its economic impact or whether, should that impact be negative, alternative measures would achieve the Commission's legitimate goals while having less impact upon the economy; and

WHEREAS, the restructuring and deregulation should create new opportunities for business enterprises currently located within the Commonwealth, business enterprises considering relocating within the Commonwealth, and minority-owned businesses and spur the development of new technologies that promise to improve the lives of all Virginians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that a joint subcommittee be established to study the regulatory responsibilities, policies, and activities of the State Corporation Commission as they relate to successful economic development in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall examine the structure, staffing and budget of the State Corporation Commission to determine whether it is adequate and appropriate for the challenges of the twenty-first century. The joint subcommittee shall also examine the planning currently under way by the Department of Business Assistance, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Department of Minority Business Enterprise

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60 to maximize the economic development potential associated with the restructuring and deregulation of
61 industry within the Commonwealth.

62 The joint subcommittee shall consist of thirteen members, which shall include seven legislative
63 members and six nonlegislative citizens and ex officio members as follows: four members of the House
64 of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker; three members of the Senate, to be appointed by the
65 Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; three citizens to be appointed by the Speaker; two
66 citizens to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and the Attorney General
67 or his designee to serve ex officio.

68 The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. The State Corporation
69 Commission shall provide such assistance and information as is needed for the work of the joint
70 subcommittee. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee,
71 upon request.

72 The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$18,000.

73 The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations
74 to the Governor and the 2002 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the
75 Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

76 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
77 Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the
78 study.