

2007 SESSION

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SENATE BILL NO. 1407

Offered January 19, 2007

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 3.1-14.4, relating to establishment of crop incentive programs.

Patron—Hanger

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 3.1-14.4 as follows:

§ 3.1-14.4. Department to establish crop incentive programs.

A. From such funds as may be appropriated for such purposes and from gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received, the Department shall establish a crop incentive program to:

1. Encourage the production of switch grass in the Commonwealth as a source of biomass for energy generation and transportation, thereby supporting Virginia farmers and farm communities in their efforts to (i) reduce nonpoint source pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and other waters of the Commonwealth, (ii) restore depleted soils, (iii) provide wildlife habitat, (iv) reduce greenhouse gases, and (v) reduce the country's dependence on foreign supplies of energy;

2. Assist the development and initial marketing for farm wineries; and

3. Promote shellfish aquaculture within the waters of the Chesapeake Bay with emphasis on creating a mechanism for converting "traditional watermen" who rely on harvesting marine fish and shellfish to one where they are able to raise and harvest significant amounts of aquaculture shellfish.

B. The Department shall provide funds in the form of grants to accomplish the objectives described in subsection A. The Department shall develop guidelines for the operation of the program that shall include, at a minimum, eligibility criteria for receiving grant awards, financial accountability for receiving grant awards, allowable uses of grant funds, and programmatic priorities.

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