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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 56

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

Directing the Virginia Housing Commission to study the problem of vacant residential units in densely populated urban areas. Report.

Patron—Locke_____
Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the existence of vacant and abandoned residential properties is a national phenomenon; and

WHEREAS, rapid growth on the fringes of many metropolitan regions has drawn development from urban cores and inner-ring suburbs, leaving abandoned buildings and vacant properties; and

WHEREAS, this phenomenon takes many forms, including houses left behind because of suburban migration, the movement of job centers, and industrial downsizing; and

WHEREAS, downtown areas that once thrived socially, culturally, and economically have suffered increasingly from the large areas of abandoned and vacant residential properties that exist within their boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the increasingly profound effects of vacant residential properties and land not cared for by the owners in densely populated urban areas lead to lower tax revenues, higher municipal costs, the presence of dangerous structures, and serious environmental and public health consequences; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Housing Commission be directed to study the problem of vacant residential units in densely populated urban areas.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Housing Commission shall also (i) quantify the socio-economic impact on densely populated urban areas of abandoned and vacant residential buildings on adjacent property, localities, and the Commonwealth and (ii) consider the importance of the rights of absent property owners versus the rights of property owners who live in the locality.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Housing Commission for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Housing Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Virginia Housing Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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