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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 94

Offered January 9, 2008

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Recognizing the need for the Commission on Climate Change to provide leadership and assist the General Assembly and the Governor.

Patrons—Ticer, Barker and Petersen; Delegates: Caputo, Moran and Watts

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Virginia Energy Plan states that carbon dioxide emissions rose in Virginia by approximately 34 percent from 1990 to 2004, a rate nearly twice the national average; that climate change will affect the Commonwealth's population, wildlife, and economy; that a rising of the mid-Atlantic sea level will threaten coastal islands, low-lying areas, and the Chesapeake Bay; that atmospheric changes will cause an increase in the frequency of tropical storms; and that changing rain and temperature patterns will disrupt agriculture and forestry; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Energy Plan urges that the Commonwealth achieve the following by 2017: (i) increase energy independence with an emphasis on conservation and clean fuel technologies by reducing the rate of growth of energy use by 40 percent; (ii) expand consumer energy education to overcome barriers to implementing energy-efficiency and conservation actions and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2025, bringing emissions back to 2000 levels; and (iii) capitalize on economic development opportunities through business expansion and increased research and development in areas of strength; and

WHEREAS the Virginia Energy Plan confirms that energy efficiency and conservation provide the least costly and most readily deployable energy resource options, that implementing energy-efficiency and renewable-energy recommendations will allow Virginia to meet a goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 15 percent, or 18 million metric tons per year, and that energy-efficiency and conservation actions alone will not be sufficient to reach the plan's 30 percent emissions reduction goal; and

WHEREAS the Virginia Energy Plan recommends that the Commonwealth initiate an aggressive set of actions to expand use of energy efficiency, conservation, and demand management to offset electric demand and use, and recommends deployment of new energy conservation technologies; and

WHEREAS the Commonwealth enacted voluntarily a renewable energy portfolio standard in 2007 that calls for Virginia's participating investor-owned electric utilities to generate four percent or more of their electricity from renewable resources by 2012, seven percent or more by 2017, and 12 percent more by 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Energy Plan recommends that the Commonwealth create a Commission on Climate Change charged with preparing a Climate Change Action Plan that would (i) calculate the size of and contributors to Virginia's carbon footprint, (ii) address the effects of increasing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations on the state, (iii) identify what Virginia needs to do to prepare for the likely consequences of climate change, and (iv) identify what actions are needed to meet goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the need for the Commission on Climate Change to provide leadership and assist the General Assembly and the Governor.

INTRODUCED

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