

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to require the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Technology to evaluate*
3 *opportunities for developing a network for geospatial health research.*

4 [S 549]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

7 1. § 1. *That the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Technology shall evaluate*
8 *opportunities to partner with nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education in the*
9 *Commonwealth to develop a network for geospatial health research. Such evaluation shall include*
10 *consideration of opportunities for:*

11 1. *Establishing relationships with academic programs throughout the Commonwealth that use*
12 *geospatial analysis to understand and assess environmental health, public health, and health care issues,*
13 *to strengthen programs through technical assistance, provide support for graduate research, and*
14 *facilitate sharing of education opportunities across institutions, including (i) developing a network of*
15 *experts and a system of peer review that does not limit individual institution's academic freedom; (ii)*
16 *supporting educational advancement; (iii) providing a conduit for seeking grant funding for research*
17 *and practice; (iv) supplying technical geographic information system infrastructure support; and (v)*
18 *assisting state health agencies, policy makers, and health administrators in understanding optimal*
19 *targeting and utilization of resources;*

20 2. *Supporting and coordinating academic, state agency, and private sector expertise in geospatial*
21 *analysis, health policy, health planning, environmental health analysis, and epidemiology and facilitating*
22 *the development of new approaches and methodologies to sustain effective public health and health care*
23 *interventions across all health-related state agencies throughout the Commonwealth;*

24 3. *Coordinating, with the Virginia Geographic Information Network Division, the development of a*
25 *clearinghouse for geospatially referenced health and health systems' relevant data through a web-based*
26 *geospatial data-sharing system;*

27 4. *Expanding research opportunities and increasing potential funding opportunities for relevant*
28 *public health research in Virginia by seeking private sector grants and other funding to the benefit of*
29 *health and health care stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth;*

30 5. *Providing a broad array of private and public entities with the requisite data to develop*
31 *appropriate environmental health analysis, health care delivery models, and assessment within the health*
32 *and health care system in Virginia and providing technical assistance in analyzing such data;*

33 6. *Functioning as a service organization to cost-effectively leverage existing hardware, software,*
34 *data, applications, and personnel to support new research projects within its partner organizations; and*

35 7. *Making geospatial services and data available to faculty and students from educational institutions*
36 *as well as to the Department of Health, public health officials and researchers, and other appropriate*
37 *persons, with the goal of improving existing public health programs, developing new evidence-based*
38 *initiatives, and better informing the health policy decision-making process through health-related*
39 *assessment activities.*

40 § 2. *That the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Technology shall report their findings*
41 *to the Governor; the Senate Committees on Education and Health, Finance, and General Laws and*
42 *Technology; and the House Committees on Appropriations, Health, Welfare and Institutions, and Science*
43 *and Technology no later than December 1, 2010.*

ENROLLED

SB549ER