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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 35

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 12, 2010

Requesting the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to study tidal shoreline management in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Northam

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, shorelines of all estuaries erode over time due to manmade and natural processes and one-third of all shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay are classified as eroding, with some areas losing as much as eight to 11 inches of shoreline per year; and

WHEREAS, traditional methods to protect shorelines, such as riprap revetments, bulkheads, and seawalls, have replaced shoreline vegetation, reduced water filtration and habitat functions, steepened shorelines, and reduced or removed shallow-water nurseries and refuge habitats for many estuarine species; and

WHEREAS, eighty-five percent of the Chesapeake Bay shoreline is privately owned, and it is critical to provide education to landowners on the benefits of living shorelines that employ natural habitat elements including emergent marsh grasses, submerged aquatic vegetation, riparian vegetation, coarse woody debris, and oyster reef and shell; and

WHEREAS, the development of tidal shoreline resources in the Commonwealth may be regulated or directed by numerous federal, state, and local agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and local wetlands and zoning boards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Institute of Marine Science be requested to study tidal shoreline management in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall (i) review tidal shoreline management in the Commonwealth and similarly situated states; (ii) identify potential changes to the regulatory structure of tidal shoreline management to reduce the cost and time required to issue a permit; (iii) identify regulatory innovations that would increase adoption of living shorelines among shoreline landowners; and (iv) make specific recommendations to achieve the sustained protection of tidal shoreline resources.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Division of Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2010, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and 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 no later than the first day of the 2011 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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