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HOUSE BILL NO. 995

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 10.1-1107 and 10.1-1156 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department of Forestry's payments for timber sales.*

Patrons—Ransone and Edmunds

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 10.1-1107 and 10.1-1156 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 10.1-1107. Purchase of lands and acceptance of gifts for forestry purposes by the State Forester; management; definition of state forests.

A. The State Forester shall have authority to purchase in the name of the Commonwealth lands suitable for state forests. He may accept for state forest purposes gifts, devises and bequests of real and personal property as well as endowments, funds, and grants from any source. Unless otherwise restricted by the terms of the gift, devise or bequest, the State Forester is authorized, in the name of the Commonwealth, to convey or lease any such real property given to it, with the consent and approval of the Governor and the General Assembly and the approval of the instrument as to form by the Attorney General. Mineral and mining rights over and under land donated may be reserved by the donors.

B. The State Forester shall have the power and authority to accept gifts, donations and contributions of land, and to enter into agreements for the acquisition by purchase, lease or otherwise with, the United States, or any agency or agent thereof, of lands for state forests.

C. The State Forester shall have authority to provide for the management, development and utilization of any lands purchased, leased or otherwise acquired, to sell or otherwise dispose of products on or derived from the land, and to enforce regulations governing state forests, the care and maintenance thereof, and the prevention of trespassing thereon, and such other regulations deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. Approval by the Governor or General Assembly shall not be required for the sale or harvesting of timber on state forest lands or other lands over which the Department has supervision and control.

D. In exercising the powers conferred by this section, the State Forester shall not obligate the Commonwealth for any expenditure in excess of any funds either donated or appropriated to the Department for such purpose.

E. One-fourth of the gross proceeds derived from *timber sales on* any state forest lands so acquired by the State Forester shall be paid annually by the State Forester to the counties in which such lands are respectively located, and shall become a part of the general funds of such counties, except for Appomattox, Buckingham and Cumberland Counties. For the Counties of Appomattox, Buckingham and Cumberland, one-eighth of the gross proceeds derived from *timber sales on* any state forest lands acquired in these counties shall become part of the general funds of these counties and one-eighth shall be expended annually by the Department, upon consultation with each county, for the enhancement of recreational opportunities on those state forest lands located in the county. This subsection shall not apply to properties acquired or managed for nonstate forest purposes.

F. As used in this chapter unless the context requires a different meaning, "state forest" means lands acquired for the Commonwealth by purchase, gift or lease pursuant to this section. These lands shall be managed and protected for scientific, recreational and educational purposes. Uses of the state forests shall include, but not be limited to, research, demonstrations, tours, soil and water management and protection, hunting, fishing and other recreational activities.

G. All acquisitions of real property under this section shall be subject to the provisions of § 2.2-1149. The Attorney General shall approve the form of the instruments prior to execution.

§ 10.1-1156. Funds credited to Department; disbursements.

All funds paid into the state treasury pursuant to § 10.1-1152 shall be credited to the Department and maintained in the Reforestation Operations Fund to be expended annually, in the following order:

1. ~~One-fourth of the gross revenue so derived shall be paid into the treasuries of the counties wherein state forests are located proportionately according to the revenue derived from the sale of special permits;~~

2. From the balance remaining after providing for such payments to the counties *annual gross receipts*, there shall be paid the costs of preparing and issuing the permits, including the compensation to the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, which is authorized to sell ~~hunting and trapping state~~

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59 *forest special use* permits;

60 32. The remainder may be expended by the State Forester for ~~game and forest~~ *administration and*
61 management in such state forests. All funds expended by the State Forester in the development,
62 management, and protection of the game resources in state forests shall be in cooperation with the
63 Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.