

Department of Planning and Budget

2014 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB529

House of Origin	X	Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled

2. Patron: Pogge

3. Committee: Rules

4. Title: Federal parks in Virginia; provision of temporary funding.

5. Summary: Authorizes the Governor to provide funding and execute necessary agreements to allow the temporary operation of any Virginia property controlled by the National Park Service in the event of a federal government shutdown. The funds may come from the State Park Conservation Resources Fund, voluntary donations, funds allocated to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or other sources.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: See Item 8.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary, see Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: The fiscal implication of this bill cannot be determined at this time since it would depend on which National Park Service park or parks the Governor selects to continue to operate and how long the time period the park or parks are open. There are over twenty National Parks spread throughout Virginia of various sizes and types. The following is a sample of some of the parks located in Virginia: Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, Arlington House National Memorial, Assateague Island National Seashore, Blue Ridge Parkway, Booker T. Washington National Monument, Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fort Monroe National Monument, Jamestown National Historic Site, Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, Petersburg National Battlefield, Richmond National Battlefield Park, Shenandoah National Park, Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, and Wolf Trap National Park for The Performing Arts

The Shenandoah National Park is one of the flagship national parks in the east with nearly 200,000 acres, including 79,579 acres of federally designated Wilderness under the National Wilderness Act. It's most prominent feature is the Sky Line Drive – a 105 mile scenic highway that runs the entire length of the park and connects with the Blue Ridge Parkway at Afton Mountain and that is a National Historic Landmark. There are over 500 miles of hiking and equestrian trails in the park, including 75 paved overlooks, thousands of linear feet of historic stone walls, drainage systems, culverts, as well as summer mowing and winter snow and ice removal. If the park is operated by the Commonwealth, even on a temporary basis, then the State

may have to absorb the full cost of maintaining all of its associated features. To compare, the Department of Conservation and Recreation's State Park system consists of about 70,000 acres, with its largest park being Pocahontas at 8,000 acres. The Commonwealth provides about \$17 million in General Fund support of the \$35.9 million appropriation for its state parks. The remaining expenditures come from the State Park Conservation Resources Fund. The State also has five land banked park sites waiting development funding.

The bill notes that funding for the operation of the park or parks could come from the State Park Conservation Resources Fund, voluntary donations, funds allocated to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or other sources.

The State Park Conservation Resources Fund consists of all state park fees, fees from concessions, civil penalties assessed pursuant to § 10.1-200.2 and under § 10.1-200.3, all revenues associated with forest product sales on state parks pursuant to § 10.1-113, and all funds occurring from, on account of, or to the use or management of state parks acquired or held by the department. The fund may be expended for the conservation, development, maintenance, and operations of state parks acquired or held by the Department. Given this, the cash balance varies throughout the year, with most revenue and expenditures occurring in the warmer months. Given this, it is unclear if there are sufficient funds in the State Park Conservation Resources Fund, voluntary donations, or other funds allocated to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, to sustain national park operations. This would depend on the type and size of the park or parks, and the duration of operation.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: The Department of Conservation and Recreation.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 01/14/2014
HB529.doc/jlm

cc: secretary of Natural Resources