

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 62.1-256.1, relating to establishment of the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee.

[H 1924]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 62.1-256.1 as follows:

§ 62.1-256.1. Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee established.

A. The Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee (the Committee) is hereby established as an advisory committee to assist the State Water Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality in developing, revising, and implementing a management strategy for ground water in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. The Committee shall be appointed by the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality and shall be composed of nonlegislative citizen members consisting of representatives of industrial and municipal water users; representatives of public and private water providers; developers and representatives from the economic development community; representatives of agricultural, conservation, and environmental organizations; state and federal agencies officials; and university faculty and citizens with expertise in water resources-related issues. The Committee shall meet at least four times each calendar year.

Members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for their service and shall not be entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

B. The Committee shall examine (i) options for developing a long-term alternative water sources, including water reclamation and reuse, ground water recharge, desalination, and surface water options, including creation of storage reservoirs; (ii) the interaction between the Department of Environmental Quality's ground water management programs and local and regional water supply plans within the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area for purposes of determining water demand and possible solutions for meeting that demand; (iii) potential funding options both for study and for implementation of management options; (iv) alternative management structures, such as a water resource trading program, formation of a long-term ground water management committee, and formation of a commission; (v) additional data needed to more fully assess aquifer health and sustainable ground water management strategies; (vi) potential future ground water permitting criteria; and (vii) other policies and procedures that the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality determines may enhance the effectiveness of ground water management in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. The Committee shall develop specific statutory, budgetary, and regulatory recommendations, as necessary, to implement its recommendations.

C. The Committee shall report the results of its examination and related recommendations to the State Water Commission and the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality no later than August 1, 2017. The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality shall issue a report responding to the Committee's recommendations to the Governor, the State Water Commission, the Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission no later than November 1, 2017.

2. That the provisions of this act shall expire on January 1, 2018.

3. That unless otherwise agreed to by a ground water management permittee, the State Water Control Board and the Department of Environmental Quality shall not issue draft permits that would require reductions in permitted volumes of ground water withdrawals prior to December 31, 2015.

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