

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

CHAPTER 482

An Act to request the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority to study ways to incentivize the development of affordable housing in the Commonwealth of Virginia; report.

[H 854]

Approved March 27, 2020

Whereas, affordable housing is becoming more and more difficult for many individuals and families to acquire throughout all regions (suburban, urban, and rural) of the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, anticipated economic and workforce growth will significantly increase the need for affordable housing in the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, the preservation and expansion of assisted, affordable multifamily housing is one of the most important housing issues facing the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, the high cost burden of housing, especially for lower-wage earners or those with special needs, is contributing to housing instability and homelessness; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. *§ 1. That the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority be requested to study ways to incentivize the development of affordable housing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

In conducting its study, the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority shall convene a stakeholder advisory group consisting of individuals with expertise in land development, construction, affordable housing, real estate finance, tax credit syndication, and other areas of expertise as determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority, and at least one resident of an affordable housing property. Such advisory group shall (i) determine the quantity and quality of affordable housing and workforce housing across the Commonwealth, (ii) conduct a review of current programs and policies to determine the effectiveness of current housing policy efforts, (iii) develop an informed projection of future housing needs in the Commonwealth and determine the order of priority of those needs, and (iv) make recommendations for the improvement of housing policy in the Commonwealth.

The advisory group shall consider the following proposals as well as other proposals it considers advisable during the course of its analysis and deliberations: (a) a Virginia rent subsidy program to work in conjunction with the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, (b) utility rate reduction for qualified affordable housing, (c) real property tax reduction for qualified affordable housing for localities that desire to provide such an incentive, (d) bond financing options for qualified affordable housing, and (e) existing programs to increase the supply of qualified affordable housing.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority for this study, upon request.

The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing and Development Authority shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2020, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of the findings and recommendations of the stakeholder advisory group 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 2021 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.