

21101513D

HOUSE BILL NO. 2023

Offered January 13, 2021

Prefiled January 12, 2021

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 22 of Title 15.2 a section numbered 15.2-2209.3, by adding a section numbered 15.2-2288.9, and by adding in Chapter 26 of Title 45.1 a section numbered 45.1-394.1, relating to solar and wind farms; reporting of acreage by locality.*

Patron—Poindexter

Referred to Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 22 of Title 15.2 a section numbered 15.2-2209.3, by adding a section numbered 15.2-2288.9, and by adding in Chapter 26 of Title 45.1 a section numbered 45.1-394.1 as follows:

§ 15.2-2209.3. Reporting acreage devoted to solar or wind farms.

Each locality shall provide to the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy information about the amount of land formerly in production agriculture or silviculture that has been approved for development into or has been developed into solar or wind farms. The calculation of the area of a solar or wind farm shall include associated roads, infrastructure, including transmission lines to the electrical grid, and buffers as appropriate.

§ 15.2-2288.9. Development of solar or wind farms.

In adopting ordinances for and approving the development of solar and wind farm projects, each locality shall consider the amount of total land in the locality that will be devoted to such projects; the effects of such projects on birds and other wildlife, including the effects on wildlife corridors, food, and cover; the effects of such projects on endangered species; the effect of the development on local road loads during and after construction; the creation of local jobs after construction; potential local tax revenue; and the appropriateness of an industrial-level facility in a rural community, if applicable.

§ 45.1-394.1. Solar or wind farms on agricultural and silvicultural lands; database.

The Division of Energy shall, by January 1, 2022, establish a database to collect and maintain figures on the amount of land formerly in production agriculture or silviculture that has been approved for development into or has been developed into solar or wind farms. The database shall be organized by locality and shall be updated with new projects as they are reported to the Division pursuant to § 15.2-2209.3.