

# 2024 SESSION

## SENATE SUBSTITUTE

24108638D

### HOUSE BILL NO. 309

#### AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations  
on February 29, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Hope)

A *BILL to direct the Department of Forestry to convene a technical advisory committee to evaluate current methods of forest canopy and health assessment for a forestland and tree canopy assessment study.*

#### **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. § 1.** *That the Department of Forestry (the Department) shall convene a technical advisory committee to evaluate current methods of forest canopy and health assessment to identify the most cost-effective means for the Department to perform a forestland and tree canopy assessment study for the Commonwealth. The technical advisory committee shall assist the Department in establishing goals and refining parameters for the study in support of any future budget requests that may include goals and parameters related to (i) the current status and trends of forests and tree canopies in the Commonwealth, (ii) challenges to forest health, forestland, and tree canopy conservation efforts, (iii) priority forests for conservation emphasizing protection of streams or wetlands, areas with steep slopes or highly erodible soils, wildlife corridors, and large contiguous blocks of forest, (iv) forest-related and tree canopy-related goals, (v) current and potential funding streams to achieve forest and tree canopy conservation goals, and (vi) consistency with the objectives of the Board of Forestry with respect to forest management.*

*The Department shall report to the General Assembly by November 1, 2024, on the findings of the technical advisory committee.*

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HB309S1