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SENATE BILL NO. 234

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
on February 6, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Hashmi)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 17 of Title 45.2 an article numbered 10, consisting of a section numbered 45.2-1735, relating to Parking Lot Solar Development Pilot Grant Program; report.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 17 of Title 45.2 an article numbered 10, consisting of a section numbered 45.2-1735, as follows:

Article 10.

Parking Lot Solar Development Pilot Grant Program.

§ 45.2-1735. *Parking Lot Solar Development Pilot Grant Program; report.*

A. As used in this section:

"Distribution company" means an incumbent electric utility that owns, operates, and maintains an electric distribution system.

"Energy community" means (i) a brownfield, as defined in § 45.2-1725; (ii) a metropolitan statistical area or non-metropolitan statistical area that (a) has 0.17 percent or greater direct employment or 25 percent or greater local tax revenues related to the extraction, processing, transport, or storage of coal, oil, or natural gas and (b) has an unemployment rate at or above the national average unemployment rate for the previous year; or (iii) a census tract (a) in which a coal mine has closed or a coal-fired electric generating unit has been retired or (b) that is directly adjoining to any census tract in which a coal mine has closed or a coal fired electric generating unit has been retired.

"Low-income community" means any population census tract if (i) the poverty rate for such tract is at least 20 percent; (ii) in the case of a tract not located within a metropolitan area, the median family income for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of statewide median family income; or (iii) in the case of a tract located within a metropolitan area, the median family income for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of the greater of statewide median family income or the metropolitan area median family income.

"Parking lot" means a paved land area or facility for the temporary parking or storage of motor vehicles used for personal, business, or commercial purposes.

"Program" means the Parking Lot Solar Development Pilot Grant Program.

"Solar project" means a photovoltaic solar installation on a canopy constructed over a parking lot.

B. With all funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf, the Parking Lot Solar Development Pilot Grant Program is hereby established for the purposes of encouraging the development of solar projects up to one megawatt in size in Chesterfield County and Richmond City through grants. In administering the Program, the Department shall consult with the Department of Environmental Quality to establish and publish guidelines and criteria for solar projects, including preference for solar project sites located near areas of high electric demand, solar projects that will decrease the need for new transmission lines, solar projects located near future electric vehicle charging sites, and solar projects located near low-income community and energy community sites. The criteria for grant recipients shall include requirements for solar project developers to hire local residents to implement the Program. The Commission and the Department of Energy shall administer the Program and issue guidelines for its administration to oversee each solar project grant provided through the Program and ensure annual reporting on each such project.

C. The Department, in consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality, shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly regarding the administration of the Program for the preceding fiscal year. The report shall include the number of projects installed, the number of acres preserved through the installation of solar projects, the amount of nameplate capacity constructed under the Program, the number of jobs created as a direct result of the Program, and the general economic impact of the Program. The report shall be submitted to the Chairs of the House Committee on Commerce and Energy and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor no later than November 1 of each year. No annual report shall be required if the Program does not receive funding.