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SENATE BILL NO. 595

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 10, 2024

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6, relating to comprehensive plan; healthy communities strategy.*

Patrons—Bagby and Aird; Delegate: Rasoul

Referred to Committee on Local Government

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 15.2-2223.6 as follows:

§ 15.2-2223.6. Comprehensive plan; healthy communities strategy.

A. Beginning July 1, 2024, A locality may, during the next scheduled and all subsequent reviews of its comprehensive plan, as required in § 15.2-2230, adopt a healthy communities strategy that meets the requirements of this section.

B. The healthy communities strategy may include:

1. Identifying each neighborhood that contains major sources of pollution or hazardous waste sites within the locality's jurisdiction, on the basis of data from the United States Census Bureau;

2. Identifying objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in those neighborhoods identified in subdivision 1 by means that include the reduction of pollution exposure; the improvement of air and water quality; emergency management; resilience to increased flooding and excessive heat; and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity;

3. Identifying objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in public decision-making processes by residents of those neighborhoods identified in subdivision 1;

4. Identifying objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs in those census tracts identified in subdivision 1 that promote healthy communities, including affordable broadband Internet access, job training, access to healthy foods, aging in place, equitable access to public parks and greenways, increased tree canopy, public transit services, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, electric vehicle charging, and other clean transportation options; and

5. Identifying objectives and policies that encourage linking public transit with community and health services and siting or co-locating health services in unconventional settings to ensure convenient access for all community members.

INTRODUCED

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