

1998 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 185

Requesting the Secretary of Public Safety to study the search and rescue efforts in the Commonwealth and determine the appropriate level of state funding therefor.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 1998

Agreed to by the Senate, March 10, 1998

WHEREAS, search and rescue incidents are complex events requiring quick response and extensive training; and

WHEREAS, on average, more fatalities occur each year from search incidents in the Commonwealth than the combined totals from all natural disasters and hazardous material incidents; and

WHEREAS, state search and rescue (SAR) volunteers have already contributed over 57,000 man-hours and traveled over 167,000 miles during search and rescue incidents, representing a savings of over \$900,000 to the Commonwealth and local governments; and

WHEREAS, state volunteer SAR teams do not have adequate funding to purchase equipment and address basic operating costs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Emergency Services lacks a direct legislative mandate to conduct search and rescue activities; and

WHEREAS, increasing state support to improve SAR training opportunities, update current courses, and provide additional administrative support requires careful consideration of a variety of complex fiscal and policy issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Secretary of Public Safety be requested to study the search and rescue efforts in the Commonwealth and determine the appropriate level of state funding therefor. In conducting the study, the Secretary shall seek the input and expertise of the Department of Emergency Services, local law enforcement, fire and rescue personnel, and SAR volunteers.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Secretary for this study, upon request.

The Secretary shall complete his work in time to submit his findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1999 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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