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HOUSE BILL NO. 671

Offered January 22, 1998

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 2 of Title 28.2 an article numbered 8, consisting of sections numbered 28.2-245, 28.2-246, and 28.2-247, relating to the establishment of the Fishery Resource Grant Program.

Patrons—Diamonstein and Bloxom

Referred to Committee on Chesapeake and Its Tributaries

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 2 of Title 28.2 an article numbered 8, consisting of sections numbered 28.2-245, 28.2-246, and 28.2-247, as follows:

*Article 8.**Fishery Resource Grant Program.*

§ 28.2-245. Fishery Resource Grant Program established; Consortium to administer; purpose; eligibility.

A. There is hereby created, within the Virginia Sea Grant Program, the Fishery Resource Grant Program which shall be administered by the Graduate Marine Science Consortium at the University of Virginia.

B. The purpose of the Fishery Resource Grant Program is to protect and enhance the Commonwealth's coastal fishery resources through the awarding of grants in the following areas:

- 1. New fisheries equipment or gear;*
- 2. Environmental pilot studies on issues including water quality and fisheries habitat;*
- 3. Aquaculture or mariculture of marine-dependent species; or*
- 4. Seafood technology.*

C. The Consortium shall advertise the availability of grant funds and shall solicit, receive, and review grant applications. Grants shall be awarded by the Consortium after consideration of the recommendations of the Fishery Resource Grant Advisory Board. The decisions regarding who receives the grant awards shall be the responsibility of the Consortium. Commercial fishermen who currently possess a commercial license pursuant to § 28.2-241 shall be the only persons eligible to receive grants under this program.

D. The Consortium may establish a peer review panel to assist in determining the relative merits of each proposal.

E. Any general funds for the Fishery Resource Grant Program shall be appropriated to the Consortium, which shall be reimbursed for the reasonable costs incurred in administering and monitoring the grant program. If funds remain at the end of a grant cycle, the Consortium may carry forward such funds to the next funding cycle.

§ 28.2-246. Fishery Resource Grant Advisory Board established; membership; duties.

A. The Fishery Resource Grant Advisory Board shall be composed of seven members to be selected in the following manner: five members shall be appointed by the Graduate Marine Science Consortium from nominations made by commercial watermen's associations, one member shall be appointed by the Commissioner of the Marine Resources Commission, and one member shall be appointed by the Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

B. The Advisory Board shall (i) in cooperation with commercial fishermen and the Consortium, establish by July 1 of each year, the priority areas in which grants shall be awarded and (ii) review each application and make its recommendation to the Consortium.

§ 28.2-247. Graduate Marine Science Consortium to submit report.

At the end of each grant cycle, the Graduate Marine Science Consortium shall submit a report to the Committee on the Chesapeake and Its Tributaries; the House Committee on Appropriations; the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; the Senate Committee on Finance; the Marine Resources Commission; and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services describing the projects funded and moneys expended.

INTRODUCED

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