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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 662**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

(Proposed by the House Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources
on February 5, 1999)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Murphy)

Requesting the Department of Environmental Quality to study issues surrounding land application and reclamation and reuse of treated wastewater

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is a party to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, which establishes the goal of reducing nutrient loadings to the Chesapeake Bay by 40 percent by the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, many local governments and industries are faced with significant costs for upgrading conventional wastewater treatment plants with biological nutrient removal technology; and

WHEREAS, the land application of treated effluent is an alternative method for disposal of treated wastewater; and

WHEREAS, one of the objectives of the 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement is to "evaluate and institute, where appropriate, alternative technologies ... such as ... land application " of treated wastewater effluent; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress established in the Clean Water Act the goal of ending the discharge of pollutants to the waters of the United States by 1985; and

WHEREAS, the reclamation and reuse of treated wastewater has substantial potential to assist the Commonwealth in meeting the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and the Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, reclaimed treated wastewater has been used for the irrigation of golf courses, athletic fields, forests and farmland, as well as for snow-making and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth suffers periodic droughts, producing agricultural stress and regional depletion of ground and surface water, and reclamation and reuse may be a potential source of water for alleviating water shortages locally; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth recognizes that water is a precious commodity and should be managed as efficiently as possible for as many uses as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth should be committed to encouraging the use of innovative technologies to provide solutions to environmental challenges; and

WHEREAS, questions have arisen regarding the adequacy of the Commonwealth's regulatory structure and existing guidance for the reclamation and reuse of treated wastewater; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality be requested to study the issues surrounding land application and reclamation and reuse of treated wastewater. The study shall include, but need not be limited to, (i) the environmental soundness of reclamation and reuse of wastewater for irrigation of golf courses, athletic fields, forests and farmland, as well as for snow-making and fire protection in the Commonwealth; (ii) the potential environmental benefits and risks of using reclaimed wastewater for the purpose of recharging groundwater aquifers; (iii) whether the Commonwealth should encourage and promote the use of such technology and, if so, under what conditions; and (iv) options, including, but not limited to, establishing a general permit for reclamation and reuse, modifying the Virginia Pollution Abatement Permit or modifying other regulations, so as to provide a predictable and certain process for the approval or denial of requests for the reclamation and reuse of wastewater. In carrying out this study, the Department shall examine how other states, including, but not limited to, North Carolina, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Illinois, allow or prohibit reclamation and reuse. The Department shall also examine the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Process Design Manual for the Land Application of Municipal Wastewater and the body of scientific research currently available on reclamation and reuse.

The Department shall convene an advisory group to assist in its study. The advisory group shall include representatives of engineering firms with expertise in the reclamation and reuse of wastewater; environmental organizations; agricultural organizations; the Virginia Department of Health; and Virginia's academic institutions who have expertise in the issues raised by the reclamation and reuse of wastewater.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Environmental Quality in the conduct of this study, upon request.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2000 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.