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SENATE BILL NO. 777

Offered January 8, 2025

Prefiled December 24, 2024

A BILL to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish a Low-Income Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force; report.

Patron—Locke

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. The Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) shall establish, in consultation with the Department of Energy, the Department of Social Services, the State Corporation Commission, and the Clean Energy Advisory Board, a Low-Income Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force (the Task Force). The Department shall select the members of the Task Force. The Task Force shall include 12 citizens of the Commonwealth, including at least one representative from each of the following: the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation, the Clean Energy Advisory Board, the Department of Law's Division of Consumer Counsel, and the Virginia Poverty Law Center. The Task Force shall also include at least one member representing an organization that provides home energy assessments and weatherization services in the Commonwealth and at least one member representing an organization that provides affordable housing advocacy. The members of the Task Force shall, by majority vote, select a chairperson and may select other officers or establish subcommittees as the members deem necessary.

§ 2. The purpose of the Task Force shall be to evaluate ways to coordinate government and utility services and resources to more effectively deliver energy efficient housing, weatherization resources, and energy efficiency upgrades for low-income individuals or households in the Commonwealth residing in small and large multifamily buildings, single-family dwellings, and manufactured homes. As used in this act: (i) "low-income individual or household" means a person or household in the Commonwealth whose income is no more than 60 percent of the Virginia median income or 200 percent of the federal poverty level, whichever is higher; (ii) "total cumulative energy savings" means energy savings attributable to specific energy efficiency upgrades or deferral repairs; and (iii) "whole-home energy efficiency retrofit" means renovations or upgrades following a comprehensive energy assessment that are designed to increase the health, safety, and efficiency of a home while reducing energy costs.

§ 3. On or before July 1, 2027, the Task Force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations (the report) to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, the State Corporation Commission, and the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation. The report shall (i) describe the historical federal, state, and utility funding resources available to support the energy efficiency and weatherization needs of low-income individuals or households in the Commonwealth, (ii) describe the barriers that should be addressed and the additional resources needed in order to meet the existing energy efficiency and weatherization needs of all low-income individuals or households, (iii) describe any barriers unique to the weatherization and energy efficiency needs of individuals and households residing in multifamily buildings and manufactured homes, with due consideration to the needs of residents of both small and large multifamily buildings, and shall (iv) provide policy recommendations to coordinate federal, state, and utility resources and a plan to ensure that weatherization-ready repairs and whole-home energy efficiency retrofits are provided to all eligible low-income individuals or households in the Commonwealth residing in small and large multifamily buildings, single-family dwellings, and manufactured homes by December 31, 2033. The Task Force may prepare any supplements or revisions to the report that it deems appropriate.

§ 4. The report required by this act shall include, at a minimum, (i) an estimate and analysis of the total number of low-income individuals or households by geography and housing type in the Commonwealth; (ii) the number of low-income individuals or households that remain in need of energy efficiency and weatherization improvements; (iii) the total number of low-income individuals or households who were made weatherization-ready through the Department's Weatherization Deferral Repair (WDR) program, including the housing type and type of repairs these households received; (iv) the total number of low-income individuals or households who have been placed on the WDR list; and (v) the number of low-income individuals or households that received energy efficiency upgrades, weatherization assistance, or deferral repairs from government-sponsored or utility-sponsored programs to date, and the corresponding bill and total cumulative energy savings achieved.

§ 5. In order to carry out the duties required by this act, the Task Force shall meet at least six times

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59 *annually between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2027. A quorum of two-thirds of the members shall be required*
60 *for the Task Force to approve the report or any supplements or revisions to such report.*