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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 434

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 3, 2025

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the methodology for determining non-federal sponsor contributions by localities to conduct coastal storm risk management studies in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patrons—Feggans and Hernandez

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, storm events and rising tidal waters cause recurrent flooding of the Commonwealth's land resources, result in the loss of life, damage to property, and unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, disrupt commerce and government services, and place the health, safety, and welfare of citizens living in flood-prone areas at risk; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has taken measures in recent years to prioritize the use of community and regional scale planning, protect and enhance nature-based approaches, address socioeconomic inequities, and enhance equity through flood resilience and preparedness; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Resilience Officer is tasked with coordinating and seeking to maximize the availability and use of federal, state, and private funding to address resilience challenges, initiating and assisting with the pursuit of funding opportunities at both the state and local levels, and utilizing his authority to serve as a non-federal sponsor and enter into legal agreements as provided in § 2.2-220.5 of the Code of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management study is estimated to cost the city \$2.6 billion, the Metropolitan Washington, District of Columbia Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study is estimated to cost the impacted localities \$15.2 million, and the Virginia Beach Coastal Storm Risk Management Study, Northern Virginia Coastal Storm Risk Management Study, and Virginia Peninsula Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study are ongoing and expected to result in significant and comparable cost-implementation estimates; and

WHEREAS, the non-federal cost-share for partnership in and implementation of coastal risk reduction projects is typically 35 percent of the total cost estimate, and other costs may be incurred by non-federal sponsors to ensure the safety and protection of Virginians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the methodology for determining non-federal sponsor contributions by localities to conduct coastal storm risk management studies in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall (i) examine the methodologies and criteria used by other states, if any, to apportion monetary responsibility between the state and the participating localities for the implementation costs of a coastal storm risk management study and determine the portion of costs for which the non-federal sponsor is responsible; (ii) develop a recommended methodology and any additional criteria for determining the division of costs for coastal storm risk management studies and the implementation of such studies in the Commonwealth, which shall include prioritization to implement risk-reduction projects in the Commonwealth that (a) reflect community and regional scale planning; (b) protect and enhance nature-based approaches; (c) address socioeconomic inequities; and (d) enhance equity through flood resilience and preparedness, consistent with measures outlined in subsection B of § 10.1-658 of the Code of Virginia; and (iii) consider whether a stand-alone fund shall be established to support and manage cost-share requests from non-federal sponsors for coastal storm risk management studies.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2025, and for the second year by November 30, 2026, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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