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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1616**

Offered January 8, 2025

Prefiled January 3, 2025

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 45.2-1802 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 18 of Title 45.2 an article numbered 3, consisting of sections numbered 45.2-1814 and 45.2-1815, relating to Department of Energy; Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program and Fund.*

Patron—Feggans

Committee Referral Pending

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 45.2-1802 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 18 of Title 45.2 an article numbered 3, consisting of sections numbered 45.2-1814 and 45.2-1815, as follows:**

**§ 45.2-1802. Division of Offshore Wind established.**

A. The Director shall establish the Division of Offshore Wind in the Department and shall appoint persons to direct, support, and execute the powers and duties of the Division.

B. The powers and duties of the Division include:

1. Identifying specific measures that will facilitate the establishment of the Hampton Roads region as a wind industry hub for offshore wind generation projects in state and federal waters off the United States coast;

2. Coordinating state agencies' activities related to offshore wind, including development of programs that prepare the Commonwealth's workforce to work in the offshore wind industry, create employment opportunities for Virginians within such industry, create opportunities for Commonwealth-based businesses to participate in the offshore wind industry supply chain, and attract out-of-state offshore wind-related businesses to locate within the Commonwealth;

3. Developing and implementing a stakeholder engagement strategy that identifies key groups, sets forth outreach objectives, and outlines a timeline for outreach and engagement;

4. Identifying regulatory and other barriers to the deployment of offshore wind and attraction of offshore wind supply chain businesses; ~~and~~

5. Providing staff support for the Authority and facilitating fulfillment of the Authority's purpose and duties set forth in Article 2 (§ 45.2-1803 et seq.); *and*

6. *Administering the Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program and Fund pursuant to Article 3 (§ 45.2-1814 et seq.).*

C. On or before October 15 of each year, the Division shall submit an annual summary of its activities, the ways in which those activities have furthered the functions and programs of the Division, and the benefits of the efforts of the Division to the Commonwealth and its economy to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, the House Committee on Labor and Commerce, and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor. The Division may include its submission with the report of the Authority required by § 45.2-1808.

*Article 3.*

*Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program and Fund.*

**§ 45.2-1814. Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program.**

A. *No later than January 1, 2026, the Division shall establish a program known as the Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program to advance the offshore wind industry in the Commonwealth and make expenditures from the Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Fund to prepare individuals for offshore wind careers by supporting workforce training provided at:*

1. *Public institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and vocational-technical education institutions, including basic safety training and basic technical training programs, provided that the Division shall prioritize awards to education institutions seeking accreditation in internationally recognized training standards, such as standards developed by the Global Wind Organisation;*

2. *Public institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and vocational-technical education institutions for the development, expansion, and promotion of offshore wind professional certificate programs and courses tailored to careers in the offshore wind industry;*

3. *Public institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and vocational-technical education institutions for the sponsorship of award, scholarship, and paid internship programs to support the education and training of individuals seeking careers in the offshore wind industry, provided that*

59 *the Division shall prioritize the promotion of careers in the skilled trades, water transportation, operations*  
60 *and maintenance, and other occupations that the Division may identify as high priority; and*

61 *4. Regional workforce training centers, to develop regional strategies to support the development of the*  
62 *offshore wind industry, which strategies may be published as addenda to their workforce development*  
63 *blueprints, provided that recipients of funds under this subdivision shall demonstrate a commitment to*  
64 *workforce training for members of socially or economically disadvantaged communities.*

65 *B. In making expenditures pursuant to this section, the Division shall give consideration to ways to*  
66 *expand workforce training and development that (i) support the development and coordination of secondary,*  
67 *vocational-technical, and higher education programs related to the offshore wind industry; (ii) prioritize*  
68 *workforce development for members of socially or economically disadvantaged communities; and (iii) target*  
69 *and provide additional support to veterans.*

70 **§ 45.2-1815. Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Fund.**

71 *There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Offshore*  
72 *Wind Industry Workforce Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on*  
73 *the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants,*  
74 *bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund.*  
75 *Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining*  
76 *in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but*  
77 *shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes described in § 45.2-1814.*  
78 *Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by*  
79 *the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Director of the Division.*

80 **2. That a public institution of higher education, private institutions of higher education, vocational-**  
81 **technical education institution, or regional workforce training center that receives funding through the**  
82 **Offshore Wind Industry Workforce Program, pursuant to § 45.2-1814 of the Code of Virginia, as**  
83 **created by this act, shall submit a report of its progress and related recommendations to the Chairmen**  
84 **of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce, the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor,**  
85 **and the Manufacturing Development Commission annually by September 1 of each year that such**  
86 **funding is received.**

87 **3. That the provisions of this act shall expire on January 1, 2028.**