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SENATE BILL NO. 1099

Offered January 8, 2025

Prefiled January 7, 2025

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 23.1-2911.3, relating to Virginia Community College System; Solar Workforce Development Incentive Grant Program; established.

Patron—Hashmi

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 23.1-2911.3 as follows:

§ 23.1-2911.3. Solar Workforce Development Incentive Grant Program.

A. With such funds as may be provided for such purpose pursuant to the general appropriation act, the Chancellor shall establish and implement the Solar Workforce Development Incentive Grant Program whereby any comprehensive community college that enters into a PPA, either alone or in partnership with a local school division in the region that it serves, and that provides workforce development opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, or project-based learning tied to such renewable energy projects on their campuses are eligible to apply for (i) a grant in an amount of \$100,000 per megawatt purchased and (ii) an additional grant in an amount of up to \$100,000 for projects that implement solar and battery microgrid systems in furtherance of developing community resiliency hubs in coordination with the Department of Energy's Renewables Advancing Community Energy Resilience (RACER) program.

B. In order to qualify for a grant described in clause (i) of subsection A, a comprehensive community college shall:

1. Enter into an agreement with the PPA provider detailing paid internship and educational expectations that include paid student apprenticeships or internships for high school and community college students. For every 500 kilowatts of solar power purchased, the agreement shall provide for a minimum of two paid internship positions for currently enrolled students paid for by the PPA provider and for at least 10 percent of total project hours being dedicated to workforce training for students; and

2. Develop learning objectives and assessment criteria for the internship program, establish course credit for internship completion, and provide faculty supervision throughout the internship period.

C. In order to qualify for a grant described in clause (ii) of subsection A, a comprehensive community college shall:

1. Participate in the Department of Energy's RACER program as a community resilience site, integrate campus resilience needs into existing RACER assessment tools, participate in community-driven planning processes, and identify opportunities for solar-plus-storage deployment that serve both educational and emergency response needs; and

2. Establish resilience plans that address critical facility operations during emergencies, support for vulnerable populations, integration with local emergency response systems, and workforce development opportunities through system operation and maintenance.

D. No comprehensive community college shall receive more than \$250,000 in incentive grants under this program.

E. As used in this section, "PPA" means a third party power purchase agreement entered into in accordance with the provisions of § 56-594.02.

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