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SENATE BILL NO. 927

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations
on February 10, 2025)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Head)

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-2320.3, relating to Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program established; work group; report.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-2320.3 as follows:

§ 2.2-2320.3. Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program.

A. As used in this section:

"Program" means the Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program.

"Sports tourism activity" means a youth, collegiate, or other sporting event (i) that is competitively bid; (ii) that attracts a majority of its participating athletes from outside of the Commonwealth to a sports venue or other similar facility or location capable of hosting such event; and (iii) where such venue, facility, or location is located in the Commonwealth.

"Sports tourism activity sponsor" includes a convention and visitors bureau, chamber of commerce, sports and entertainment authority, sports commission, nonprofit sports support organization, or political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or any department thereof, that provides a venue for or hosts sports tourism activity. Such term does not include any sports tourism activity sponsors outside of the Commonwealth.

B. There is hereby established the Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program for the purpose of providing grants to develop and attract sports tourism activities to the Commonwealth. The Authority shall award grants exclusively to sports tourism activity sponsors to attract such sports tourism activities to the Commonwealth. As a condition of applying for a grant pursuant to this section, an applicant shall enter into a performance agreement with the Authority that shall include provisions for disbursement of the grant, use of the grant proceeds, reporting responsibilities, and repayment obligations in the event of a failure to satisfy the performance obligations of such agreement. Any repayment of grant funds required by such performance agreement shall be paid into the state treasury.

C. The Authority shall establish guidelines, procedures, and objective criteria for the award and distribution of grants by the Program. The preparation of the guidelines shall be exempt from the requirements of Article 2 (§ 2.2-4006 et seq.) of the Administrative Process Act. Such guidelines shall include requirements for a mandatory supplemental funding match in an amount equivalent to any grant awarded by the Program.

D. The Authority shall report by November 1 of each year on any grant awards and expenditures. The report shall include total grants awarded. The Authority shall prepare the report required by this subsection in conjunction with the reports required under § 2.2-2237.1.

2. That the Virginia Tourism Authority shall convene a work group of representatives from major sporting venues, local or regional sports and entertainment authorities or departments, and hotel and lodging, restaurant and retail, and other tourism stakeholders to develop recommended guidelines for grants from the Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program (the Program) pursuant to § 2.2-2320.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act. The guidelines shall establish criteria for approving eligible major events, eligible sports tourism activity sponsors, eligible sports tourism activities, verifiable performance metrics, grant match requirements, and eligible uses of grants awarded by the Program. The work group shall complete its work by October 31, 2025, and shall provide a report on any recommended guidelines to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations and the House Committee on Appropriations.