

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to direct the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources to establish a policy task force to develop*
3 *strategies to protect existing tidal and nontidal wetlands and restore, create, and plan for the persistence*
4 *of such wetlands in the Commonwealth and to develop mechanisms to incorporate such strategies into*
5 *appropriate plans, including the Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan and the Virginia Coastal*
6 *Resilience Master Plan, to address impacts from human activities and climate change; report.*

7 [H 2034]

8 Approved

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

10 **1. § 1.** *That the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources shall establish a policy task force to develop (i)*
11 *strategies to protect existing tidal and nontidal wetlands and restore, create, and plan for the persistence of*
12 *such wetlands in the Commonwealth and (ii) mechanisms to incorporate such strategies into appropriate*
13 *plans, including the Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan and the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master*
14 *Plan, to address losses and adverse impacts from human activities and climate change. The task force shall*
15 *(a) evaluate existing policies regarding wetlands protection, restoration, creation, and mitigation in the*
16 *Commonwealth and other states; (b) recommend policy changes necessary to accelerate tidal and nontidal*
17 *wetland identification, restoration, creation, protection, and adaptation areas where such wetlands can*
18 *persist in the landscape for the Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan and the Virginia Coastal Resilience*
19 *Master Plan; and (c) explore emerging science and innovation to ensure wetland health and survival. The*
20 *task force shall report its initial findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on*
21 *Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and*
22 *Natural Resources by December 1, 2025 and shall update its report at least every two years. The task force*
23 *shall not meet less than twice annually to evaluate emerging science, policy, and best practices and, if*
24 *necessary, develop additional findings and recommendations. Membership of the task force shall include*
25 *relevant representatives of nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, the Virginia Farm Bureau, the*
26 *federal government, local governments or regional planning commissions, industry, and state entities,*
27 *including the Chesapeake Bay Commission, Department of Wildlife Resources, Department of*
28 *Environmental Quality, Marine Resources Commission, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and*
29 *the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.*

ENROLLED

HB2034ER