

## 2025 SESSION

### HOUSE SUBSTITUTE

25108206D

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2034**  
**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**  
(Proposed by the Governor  
on March 24, 2025)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Simonds)

*A BILL to direct the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources to establish a policy task force to evaluate existing policies regarding wetlands protection, restoration, creation, and mitigation in the Commonwealth and other states; recommend policy changes necessary to accelerate tidal and nontidal wetland identification, restoration, creation, and protection; and explore emerging science and innovation to ensure wetland health and survival; report.*

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

**1. § 1.** *That the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources shall establish a policy task force to (i) evaluate existing policies regarding wetlands protection, restoration, creation, and mitigation in the Commonwealth and other states; (ii) recommend policy changes necessary to accelerate tidal and nontidal wetland identification, restoration, creation, and protection; and (iii) explore emerging science and innovation to ensure wetland health and survival. The task force shall report its initial findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources by December 31, 2025, and shall update its report at least every two years. The task force shall not meet less than twice annually to evaluate emerging science, policy, and best practices and one meeting shall be held jointly with the Statewide Wetlands Technical Team led by the Department of Wildlife Resources to allow such team to review and provide feedback on the task force's proposed recommendations. Membership of the task force shall include relevant representatives of nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, the Virginia Farm Bureau, the federal government, local governments or regional planning commissions, industry, and state entities, including the Chesapeake Bay Commission, Department of Wildlife Resources, Department of Environmental Quality, Marine Resources Commission, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Virginia Institute of Marine Science.*

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