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SENATE BILL NO. 5

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled November 17, 2025

A BILL to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development to establish an Income-Qualified Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force; report.

Patrons—Locke and Deeds

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. *§ 1. That the Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) shall establish, in collaboration with the Department of Energy and with assistance from the Department of Social Services, the Income-Qualified Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Task Force (the Task Force). The purpose of the Task Force shall be to determine barriers to access and enrollment in the current energy efficiency programs for income-qualified energy customers and to evaluate and develop a plan to address any necessary improvements regarding coordination among programs for utility services that are available through utilities and state and federal government agencies and resources to more effectively deliver energy-efficient housing, weatherization resources, and energy efficiency upgrades for income-qualified individuals and households in the Commonwealth, including small and large multifamily buildings, single-family dwellings, and manufactured homes.*

§ 2. The Task Force shall consist of one representative each from the Department, the Department of Energy, the Department of Social Services, the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation, and the Division of Consumer Counsel of the Office of the Attorney General and no fewer than 13 nonlegislative citizen members of the Commonwealth to be appointed by the Director of the Department. Such nonlegislative citizen members shall include at least one clean energy advocate; one representative of the residential construction industry; one representative from a firm based in the Commonwealth that specializes in residential and commercial building energy performance, building diagnostics, or energy code compliance; one energy burden advocate; one income-qualified ratepayer advocate; one representative of an institution of higher education in the Commonwealth; and no more than three utility providers that offer energy efficiency programs. The Director shall also appoint at least one income-qualified ratepayer located in the Commonwealth who has either received weatherization assistance or attempted to obtain weatherization assistance; at least one member from each geographic region of the Commonwealth who represents an organization that provides home energy assessments and weatherization services; at least one member who represents an organization that provides affordable housing advocacy; and any other representative as deemed appropriate by the Director.

A majority of the members of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum. The members of the Task Force shall, by majority vote, elect from its membership a chair and may select other officers or establish subcommittees as the members deem necessary. The Task Force shall meet at least six times before September 30, 2027. The meetings of the Task Force shall be open to the public. A majority vote of the members shall be required to approve the report required pursuant to this act or any supplements or revisions to such report.

§ 3. On or before September 30, 2027, the Task Force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Committee on Labor and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, the Secretaries of Health and Human Resources and Natural and Historic Resources, the Commissioner of the State Corporation Commission, and the Executive Director of the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation. The report shall (i) describe the federal, state, and utility funding resources available to support the energy efficiency and weatherization needs of income-qualified individuals and households in the Commonwealth and determine whether those funding sources are sufficient to meet the needs of residents of the Commonwealth; (ii) describe the barriers that should be addressed and the additional resources needed in order to meet the existing energy efficiency and weatherization needs of all income-qualified individuals and households; (iii) describe any barriers unique to the weatherization and energy efficiency needs of individuals and households residing in multifamily buildings and manufactured homes, with due consideration given to the needs of residents of both small and large multifamily buildings; (iv) analyze whether additional programs are needed, including those that involve coordination with local governments or other partners; (v) provide policy recommendations to coordinate federal, state, and utility resources; and (vi) include a plan, with an estimated budget, prospective timeline, and potential funding sources, to ensure that weatherization-ready repairs and whole-home energy efficiency retrofits are provided to all eligible income-qualified individuals and households in the Commonwealth residing in multifamily

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buildings, single-family dwellings, and manufactured homes by December 31, 2035. The report shall also include recommendations to grow and sustain the workforce needed to provide these services. The Task Force may prepare any supplements or revisions to its report that it deems appropriate.

§ 4. The report shall include, at a minimum, (i) an estimate and analysis, by geography and housing type, of the total number of income-qualified individuals and households in the Commonwealth; (ii) the total number of households by zip code with utility arrearages in excess of $500 and in excess of $1000 for each month in Fiscal Year 2025; (iii) the number of households by zip code that received disconnection notices for their electric or gas utility service for each month in Fiscal Year 2025; (iv) the number of households by zip code that had their electric or gas utility service disconnected for each month in Fiscal Year 2025; (v) the number of income-qualified individuals and households in the Commonwealth, by geography and housing type, that remain in need of energy efficiency and weatherization improvements; (vi) the total number of income-qualified individuals and households that were made weatherization-ready through pre-weatherization repairs; (vii) the number of households by geography and housing type that have applied for weatherization and have been deferred and the number of households that have applied for weatherization but are still on a service provider's waitlist, including how long they have been on such waitlist; (viii) the number of income-qualified individuals and households that received energy efficiency upgrades, weatherization assistance, or weatherization deferral repairs from government-sponsored or utility-sponsored programs to date, and the corresponding bill and total cumulative energy savings achieved; (ix) any implementation barriers, including workforce issues, preventing or inhibiting households from accessing and enrolling in weatherization and energy efficiency programs; and (x) any other information necessary to inform policy decisions that seek to increase and improve the engagement of income-qualified individuals and households in weatherization and any energy efficiency programs available to such individuals and households.

The report shall provide specific policy recommendations with respect to landlords and owners of manufactured homes to ensure that tenants residing in single-family and multifamily dwellings and residents of manufactured homes are able to participate in the relevant energy efficiency and weatherization programs and recognize the requisite cost savings.

The report shall include specific recommendations to ensure that Virginia's Energy Efficiency Workforce is sufficiently trained and staffed at competitive wages, with consistent month-to-month and year-to-year funding.

§ 5. The report shall make publicly available any information from the previous five years that identifies by census tract or zip code (i) the number of income-qualified individuals and households that received energy efficiency improvements, weatherization, or weatherization repairs from any program administered by the Department or funded by an electric or gas utility; (ii) the cost of such improvements; and (iii) if available, the amount or estimated amount of energy saved.

§ 6. As used in this act, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Income-qualified individuals and households" means an individual or household in the Commonwealth with an income that is no more than 60 percent of the statewide median income or 200 percent of the federal poverty level, whichever is greater, or any individual or household that qualifies for an income-qualified assistance program.

"Manufactured home" means a home that is built in the controlled environment of a manufacturing plant and is transported in one or more sections on a permanent chassis. "Manufactured home" includes a mobile home.

"Total cumulative energy savings" means energy savings attributable to specific energy efficiency upgrades or weatherization deferral repairs.

"Weatherization" means the process of protecting a home's interior from outdoor elements.

"Weatherization deferral repairs" means repairs funded by the Department's Weatherization Deferral Repair Program or any other program that provides weatherization assistance for the purpose of making homes weatherization-ready.

"Weatherization-ready repairs" means any repairs that are necessary to ensure that a home is eligible to receive energy efficiency and health and safety measures available through a weatherization assistance program.

"Whole-home energy efficiency retrofit" means, upon completion of a comprehensive energy assessment, any renovations or upgrades to a home, such as mold, lead, and asbestos remediation, weatherization, improvments to energy efficiency, and repairs necessary for electrification, that are designed to increase housing quality, resident health, and the safety, resilience, and efficiency of a home while reducing energy costs.