

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB390

Patron: Askew

Bill Title: Habitat Policy Oversight Committee established; powers and duties; report.

Bill Summary: Establishes the Habitat Policy Oversight Committee within the Marine Resources Commission to advise the Commission and the Habitat Management Division of the Commission on policies within their jurisdiction and to support the Commission's coastal resilience efforts. The bill establishes the powers and duties of the Committee, provides that the Committee shall have nine voting members and two ex-officio members, and directs the Committee to submit an annual oversight report to the full Commission and the Chief Resilience Officer of the Commonwealth.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted: N/A

Explanation: This bill involves the Marine Resources Commission (MRC); however, no budget action is required. See Fiscal Analysis section, below.

Fiscal Summary: This bill establishes an additional advisory committee within MRC. Members of the committee will receive reimbursement for their actual expenses. It is anticipated that this bill may result in an increase in workload for MRC, the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources (the Secretary), the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). At this time, any expenditure impact is indeterminate but anticipated to be absorbable.

Fiscal Analysis: This fiscal impact estimate is preliminary. The fiscal impact statement will be updated as additional information is received.

This bill establishes, within the Commission, the Habitat Policy Oversight Committee to advise MRC on policies that support the agency's coastal resilience efforts. MRC and its Habitat Management Division must consider Committee recommendations in decision-making. The Division must also report to the Commission on Committee activities and how its recommendations have informed policy and program development, as well as consult with the Committee on all updates or revisions to policy matters not requiring formal Commission approval.

Under the provisions of this bill, the Division would be required to establish and attend Committee meetings, prepare meeting minutes, present recommendations and annual reports to the Commission, consult with the Committee on certain policy changes, and evaluate Committee recommendations under the provisions of this bill. MRC anticipates an increase in workload as a result of this legislation; however, the amount is indeterminate. Paragraph C of § 28.2-104.2, Code of Virginia, in this bill states that the Habitat Policy Oversight Committee must meet no less than three times per year but does not specify a number of meetings. MRC estimates that each Committee meeting will require 36 hours of staff time for associated work, for a minimum amount of staff time of 108 hours per year.

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The Habitat Policy Oversight Committee would consist of nine voting members appointed by the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources (the Secretary), which include an Associate Commissioner of the Marine Resources Commission, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), an employee of a higher education institution in Virginia, and a member of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Deputy Commissioner and Chief of the Habitat Management Division at the Commission must also serve as nonvoting ex officio members. It is anticipated that any fiscal impact on the Secretary, VIMS, DEQ, and an institution of higher education as stakeholder agencies that may result of this bill can be absorbed within agencies' existing resources.

Other: This bill is similar to HB619.