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

PUBLISHED: 3/9/2026 10:27 AM **ORIGINAL**

Bill Number: HB950PER **Patron:** Lopez
Bill Title: Use of unmanned aircraft systems by public bodies; search warrant required; exceptions.

Bill Summary: Adds the Department of Environmental Quality to the list of exceptions to the warrant requirement for the use of an unmanned aircraft system by public bodies for the implementation and civil enforcement against a permittee under the Virginia Water Resources and Wetlands Protection Program, the Virginia Erosion and Stormwater Management Act, and erosion and sediment control in localities without a Virginia Erosion and Stormwater Management Program.

Budget Amendment Necessary: **No.** **Items Impacted:** **N/A**

Explanation: This bill involves the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); however, no budget action is required. See Fiscal Analysis section, below.

Fiscal Summary: It is anticipated that any costs DEQ may incur can be absorbed within existing resources.

Fiscal Analysis: This impact statement is final. The bill allows DEQ to deploy unmanned aircraft systems without a warrant for the implementation and enforcement of the Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program, the Virginia Pollution Abatement permit program, and the Stormwater Management program under the State Water Control Law. DEQ anticipates the cost of such equipment to total $30,000. HB30/SB30, as introduced, includes $797,626 each year from the general fund for Water Protection laboratory and field equipment. DEQ also anticipates indeterminate efficiencies in enforcement activities that may allow the Department to reduce program backlogs.

Other: None.