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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Offered January 14, 2026

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the methodology for determining non-federal sponsor contributions to conduct legacy property managed retreat studies in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Glass

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, storm events and rising tidal waters cause recurrent flooding of the Commonwealth's land resources, result in the loss of life, damage to property, and unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, disrupt commerce and government services, and place the health, safety, and welfare of citizens living in flood-prone areas at risk; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to ensure that moving communities away from dangerous flood zones is done with justice, dignity, and care for the people who make up those communities; and

WHEREAS, managed retreat is the process of relocating people and infrastructure from areas vulnerable to rising water and reducing a community's risk by converting these areas to green spaces or allowing the water to inundate them; and

WHEREAS, a legacy property is a residential property owned by an individual who is at least 55 years of age and whose household income does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), located within a city or town with a population of 35,000 or fewer, and situated in a community that meets the definition of an environmental justice community under § 2.2-234 of the Code of Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the methodology for determining non-federal sponsor contributions to conduct legacy property managed retreat studies in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall (i) examine the methodologies and criteria used by other states, if any, to apportion monetary responsibility between the state and the participating localities for the implementation costs of a legacy property managed retreat study and determine the portion of costs for which the non-federal sponsor is responsible; (ii) develop a recommended methodology and any additional criteria for determining the division of costs for legacy property managed retreat studies and the implementation of such studies in the Commonwealth, which shall include prioritization to implement risk-reduction projects in the Commonwealth that (a) reflect community and regional scale planning; (b) protect and enhance nature-based approaches; (c) address socioeconomic inequities; and (d) enhance equity through flood resilience and preparedness, consistent with measures outlined in subsection B of § 10.1-658 of the Code of Virginia; and (iii) consider whether a stand-alone fund shall be established to support and manage cost-share requests from non-federal sponsors to provide relief to legacy property owners threatened by sea level rise.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2027, and for the second year by November 30, 2028, and the chair shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall state that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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