

Department of Planning and Budget 2024 Session Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB420

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Bulova

3. **Committee:** Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

4. **Title:** Temporary funding of federal park operations.

5. **Summary:** Authorizes the Governor to provide funding and execute necessary agreements to allow the temporary operation of any Virginia property controlled by the National Park Service in the event of a federal government shutdown. Such authority shall be contingent on the U.S. Department of the Interior executing an agreement which authorizes the Commonwealth to operate such property. The bill states that the funds may come from the State Park Conservation Resources Fund, voluntary donations, funds allocated to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or other sources. However, the bill clarifies that no funds originally allocated from the general fund shall be used to operate a federal park for more than 21 days without the approval of the General Assembly.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** No.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary. See Item 8.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** This bill authorizes the Governor to provide funding and execute necessary agreements to allow the temporary operation of any Virginia property controlled by the National Park Service in the event of a federal government shutdown. The bill states that the funds may come from the State Park Conservation Resources Fund, voluntary donations, funds allocated to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or other sources.

The fiscal impact of this bill is indeterminate. According to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the National Park Service (NPS) operates more than 30 separate units in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each unit reports to a regional operation, with three regional operations covering portions of the Commonwealth and other states.

DCR obtained annual operating costs for 25 National Parks and National Park Service managed sites (such as National Scenic Trails, National Historic Sites, National Military Parks, National Battlefields, and others) for Federal Fiscal Year 2023. Budget figures for all sites are not available. The total cost to operate those National Park Service managed sites was \$116,480,776.

Based on that annual operating cost, it averages \$319,125 per day to operate National Park Service facilities in Virginia. If the state chose to operate all these facilities for the 21 days specified in the proposed legislation, the cost could be approximately \$6.4 million in the first year, with expected escalation in future years. The actual cost to the state would depend on the number of facilities the state chooses to operate and the time of the year, as the cost would also be impacted by seasonality; costs will likely be higher over a 21-day period during times of the year with high visitation versus a 21-day period during times of the year with low visitation.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Conservation and Recreation.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.