

HOUSE BILL NO. 2095

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources  
on January 18, 2023)

(Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Bulova)

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 62.1-44.38 and 62.1-44.38:1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to plans  
and programs; drought evaluation and response plans; Potomac River.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 62.1-44.38 and 62.1-44.38:1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 62.1-44.38. Plans and programs; registration of certain data by water users; advisory  
committees; committee membership for federal, state, and local agencies; water supply planning  
assistance.**

A. The Board shall prepare plans and programs for the management of the water resources of the  
Commonwealth in such a manner as to encourage, promote, and secure the maximum beneficial use and  
control thereof. These plans and programs shall be prepared for each major river basin of the  
Commonwealth, and appropriate subbasins therein, including specifically the Potomac-Shenandoah River  
Basin, the Rappahannock River Basin, the York River Basin, the James River Basin, the Chowan River  
Basin, the Roanoke River Basin, the New River Basin, and the Tennessee-Big Sandy River Basin, and for  
those areas in the Tidewater and elsewhere in the Commonwealth not within these major river basins.  
Reports for each basin shall be published by the Board.

B. 1. In preparing river basin plan and program reports enumerated in subsection A, the Board  
shall (i) estimate current water withdrawals and use for agriculture, industry, domestic use, and other  
significant categories of water users; (ii) project water withdrawals and use by agriculture, industry,  
domestic use, and other significant categories of water users; (iii) estimate, for each major river and  
stream, the minimum instream flows necessary during drought conditions to maintain water quality and  
avoid permanent damage to aquatic life in streams, bays, and estuaries; (iv) evaluate, to the extent

27 practicable, the ability of existing subsurface and surface waters to meet current and future water uses,  
28 including minimum instream flows, during drought conditions; (v) evaluate, in cooperation with the  
29 Virginia Department of Health and local water supply managers, the current and future capability of public  
30 water systems to provide adequate quantity and quality of water; (vi) estimate, using a data-driven method  
31 that includes multiple reasonable assumptions about supply and demand over varying time frames, the  
32 risk that each locality and region will experience water supply shortfalls; and (vii) evaluate hydrologic,  
33 environmental, economic, social, legal, jurisdictional, and other aspects of each alternative management  
34 strategy identified.

35           2. The Board shall direct the Department of Environmental Quality (the Department) in its  
36 facilitation of regional water planning efforts. The Department shall (i) ensure that localities coordinate  
37 sufficiently in the development of regional water plans; (ii) provide planning, policy, and technical  
38 assistance to each regional planning area, differentiated according to each area's water supply challenges,  
39 existing resources, and other factors; and (iii) ensure that each regional plan clearly identifies the region's  
40 water supply risks and proposes strategies to address those risks.

41           3. When preparing drought evaluation and response plans pursuant to subdivision 1, the Board  
42 shall recognize the localities that include any portion of the service area of a water supply utility in the  
43 Commonwealth that uses the Potomac River as a water supply source as a distinct drought evaluation  
44 region. Such plans shall incorporate the provisions of the Metropolitan Washington Water Supply and  
45 Drought Awareness Response Plan: Potomac River System (2000), including provisions related to  
46 triggers, actions, and messages for the Potomac River drought evaluation region. Nothing in this  
47 subdivision regarding the incorporation of such provisions shall be construed to limit the authority of the  
48 Governor during a declared drought emergency.

49           C. The Board may, by regulation, require each water user withdrawing surface or subsurface water  
50 or both during each year to register, by a date to be established by the Board, water withdrawal and use  
51 data for the previous year including the estimated average daily withdrawal, maximum daily withdrawal,  
52 sources of water withdrawn, and volume of wastewater discharge, provided that the withdrawal exceeds  
53 one million gallons in any single month for use for crop irrigation, or that the daily average during any

54 single month exceeds 10,000 gallons per day for any other user. Location data shall be provided by each  
55 user in a coordinate system specified by the Board.

56 D. The Board shall establish advisory committees to assist it in the formulation of such plans or  
57 programs and in formulating recommendations called for in subsection E. In this connection, the Board  
58 may include committee membership for branches or agencies of the federal government, branches or  
59 agencies of the Commonwealth, branches or agencies of the government of any state in a river basin  
60 located within that state and Virginia, the political subdivisions of the Commonwealth, and all persons  
61 and corporations interested in or directly affected by any proposed or existing plan or program.

62 E. The Board shall prepare plans or programs and shall include in reports prepared under  
63 subsection A recommended actions to be considered by the General Assembly, the agencies of the  
64 Commonwealth and local political subdivisions, the agencies of the federal government, or any other  
65 persons that the Board may deem necessary or desirable for the accomplishment of plans or programs  
66 prepared under subsection B.

67 F. In addition to the preparation of plans called for in subsection A, the Board, upon written request  
68 of a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, shall provide water supply planning assistance to such  
69 political subdivision, including assistance in preparing drought management strategies, water conservation  
70 programs, evaluation of alternative water sources, state enabling legislation to facilitate a specific  
71 situation, applications for federal grants or permits, or other such planning activities to facilitate  
72 intergovernmental cooperation and coordination.

73 **§ 62.1-44.38:1. Comprehensive water supply planning process; state, regional, and local**  
74 **water supply plans.**

75 A. The Board, with advice and guidance from the Commissioner of Health, local governments,  
76 public service authorities, and other interested parties, shall establish a comprehensive water supply  
77 planning process for the development of local, regional, and state water supply plans consistent with the  
78 provisions of this chapter. This process shall be designed to (i) ensure that adequate and safe drinking  
79 water is available to all citizens of the Commonwealth; (ii) encourage, promote, and protect all other  
80 beneficial uses of the Commonwealth's water resources; (iii) encourage, promote, and develop incentives

81 for alternative water sources, including desalinization; and (iv) encourage the development of cross-  
82 jurisdictional water supply projects.

83 B. The Board shall adopt regulations designating regional planning areas based primarily on river  
84 basins as appropriate based on water supply sources. The Board shall consider existing interjurisdictional  
85 arrangements in designating regional planning areas. The Board may, as appropriate, designate multiple  
86 regional planning areas within a single river basin in order to enhance the manageability of planning within  
87 such basin. The regulations shall identify the particular regional planning area in which each locality shall  
88 participate and shall state which local stakeholder groups, including local governments, industrial and  
89 agricultural water users, public water suppliers, developers and economic development organizations, and  
90 conservation and environmental organizations, shall or may participate in coordinated water resource  
91 planning. The regulations shall ~~further~~ provide a mechanism for a locality to request a change of its  
92 designated regional planning area to an adjoining planning area that is based on water supply source, river  
93 basin, or existing or planned cross-jurisdictional relationship, which change shall be effective upon  
94 approval of the Department, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 2 (§ 2.2-4006 et seq.) of Chapter  
95 40 of Title 2.2. The regulations shall further recognize the localities that include any portion of the service  
96 area of a water supply utility in the Commonwealth that uses the Potomac River as a water supply source  
97 as a distinct regional planning area. Such plan shall incorporate the provisions of the Metropolitan  
98 Washington Water Supply and Drought Awareness Response Plan: Potomac River System (2000),  
99 including provisions related to triggers, actions, and messages for the Potomac River drought evaluation  
100 region. Nothing in this subsection regarding the incorporation of such provisions shall be construed to  
101 limit the authority of the Governor during a declared drought emergency.

102 C. 1. Each locality in a regional planning area shall participate in cross-jurisdictional, coordinated  
103 water resource planning. Such local coordination shall accommodate existing regional groups that have  
104 already developed water supply plans, including planning district commissions, and other regional  
105 planning entities as appropriate.

106 2. Each locality in a regional planning area shall develop and submit, with the other localities in  
107 that planning area, a single jointly produced regional water supply plan to the Department of

108 Environmental Quality (the Department). Such regional water supply plan shall (i) clearly identify the  
109 region's water supply risks and (ii) propose regional strategies to address those water supply risks.

110 3. Each regional water supply plan also shall comply with applicable criteria and guidelines  
111 developed by the Board. Such criteria and guidelines shall take into account existing local and regional  
112 water supply planning efforts and requirements imposed under other state or federal laws. The criteria and  
113 guidelines established by the Board shall not prohibit a town from entering into a regional water supply  
114 plan with an adjacent county in the same regional planning area.

115 4. This section is intended to inform any regional water resource planning being done in the  
116 Commonwealth pursuant to interstate compacts.

117 D. The Board and the Department shall prioritize the allocation of planning funds and other funds  
118 to localities that sufficiently participate in regional planning.

119 E. In accordance with subdivision B 2 of § 62.1-44.38, the Department shall facilitate regional  
120 planning and provide assistance to each regional planning area as needed.

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