2022 Session

Budget Bill - HB29 (Introduced)

Item 4-1.02

§ 4-1.02 WITHHOLDING OF SPENDING AUTHORITY

a. For purposes of this subsection, withholding of spending authority is defined as any action pursuant to a budget reduction plan approved by the Governor to address a declared shortfall in budgeted revenue that impedes or limits the ability to spend appropriated moneys, regardless of the mechanism used to effect such withholding.

b.1. Changed Expenditure Factors: The Governor is authorized to reduce spending authority, by withholding allotments of appropriations, when expenditure factors, such as enrollments or population in institutions, are smaller than the estimates upon which the appropriation was based. Moneys generated from the withholding action shall not be reallocated for any other purpose, provided the withholding of allotments of appropriations under this provision shall not occur until at least 15 days after the Governor has transmitted a statement of changed factors and intent to withhold moneys to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees.

2. Moneys shall not be withheld on the basis of reorganization plans or program evaluations until such plans or evaluations have been specifically presented in writing to the General Assembly at its next regularly scheduled session.

c. Increased Nongeneral Fund Revenue:

1. General fund appropriations to any state agency for operating expenses are supplemental to nongeneral fund revenues collected by the agency. To the extent that nongeneral fund revenues collected in a fiscal year exceed the estimate on which the operating budget was based, the Governor is authorized to withhold general fund spending authority, by withholding allotments of appropriations, in an equivalent amount. However, this limitation shall not apply to (a) restricted excess tuition and fees for educational and general programs in the institutions of higher education, as defined in § 4-2.01 c of this act; (b) appropriations to institutions of higher education designated for fellowships, scholarships and loans; (c) gifts or grants which are made to any state agency for the direct costs of a stipulated project; (d) appropriations to institutions for the mentally ill or intellectually disabled payable from the Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Revenue Fund; and (e) general fund appropriations for highway construction and mass transit. Moneys unallotted under this provision shall not be reallocated for any other purpose.

2. To the degree that new or additional grant funds become available to supplement general fund appropriations for a program, following enactment of an appropriation act, the Governor is authorized to withhold general fund spending authority, by withholding allotments of appropriations, in an amount equivalent to that provided from grant funds, unless such action is prohibited by the original provider of the grant funds. The withholding action shall not include general fund appropriations, which are required to match grant funds. Moneys unallotted under this provision shall not be reallocated for any other purpose.

d. Reduced General Fund Resources:

1. The term “general fund resources” as applied in this subsection includes revenues collected and paid into the general fund of the state treasury during the current biennium, transfers to the general fund of the state treasury during the current biennium, and all unexpended balances brought forward from the previous biennium.

2. In the event that general fund resources are estimated by the Governor to be insufficient to pay in full all general fund appropriations authorized by the General Assembly, the Governor shall, subject to the qualifications herein contained, withhold general fund spending authority, by withholding allotments of appropriations, to prevent any expenditure in excess of the estimated general fund resources available.

3. In making this determination, the Governor shall take into account actual general fund revenue collections for the current fiscal year and the results of a formal written re-estimate of general fund revenues for the current and next biennium, prepared within the previous 90 days, in accordance with the process specified in § 2.2-1503, Code of Virginia. Said re-estimate of general fund revenues shall be communicated to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance, House Appropriations and House Finance Committees, prior to taking action to reduce general fund allotments of appropriations on account of reduced resources.

4.a) In addition to monthly reports on the status of revenue collections relative to the current fiscal year's estimate, the Governor shall provide a written quarterly assessment of the current economic outlook for the remainder of the fiscal year to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations, House Finance, and Senate Finance Committees.

b) Within five business days after the preliminary close of the state accounts at the end of the fiscal year, the State Comptroller shall provide the Governor with the actual total of (1) individual income taxes, (2) corporate income taxes, and (3) sales taxes for the just-completed fiscal year, with a comparison of such actual totals with the total of such taxes in the official budget estimate for that fiscal year. If that comparison indicates that the total of (1) individual income taxes, (2) corporate income taxes, and (3) sales taxes, as shown on the preliminary close, was one percent or more below the amount of such taxes in the official budget estimate for the just-completed fiscal year, the Governor shall prepare a written re-estimate of general fund revenues for the current biennium and the next biennium in accordance with § 2.2-1503, Code of Virginia, to be reported to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance, House Finance and House Appropriations Committees, not later than September 1 following the close of the fiscal year.

5.a) The Governor shall take no action to withhold allotments until a written plan detailing specific reduction actions approved by the Governor, identified by program and appropriation item, has been presented to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees. Subsequent modifications to the approved reduction plan also must be submitted to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees, prior to withholding allotments of appropriations.

b) In addition to the budget reduction plan approved by the Governor, all budget reduction proposals submitted by state agencies to the Governor or the Governor's staff, including but not limited to the Department of Planning and Budget, the Governor's Cabinet secretaries, or the Chief of Staff, whether submitted electronically or otherwise, shall be made available via electronic means to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees concurrently with that budget reduction plan.

6. In effecting the reduction of expenditures, the Governor shall not withhold allotments of appropriations for:

a) More than 15 percent cumulatively of the annual general fund appropriation contained in this act for operating expenses of any one state or nonstate agency or institution designated in this act by title, and the exact amount withheld, by state or nonstate agency or institution, shall be reported within five calendar days to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees. State agencies providing funds directly to grantees named in this act shall not apportion a larger cut to the grantee than the proportional cut apportioned to the agency. Without regard to § 4-5.05 b.4. of this act, the remaining appropriation to the grantee which is not subject

to the cut, equal to at least 85 percent of the annual appropriation, shall be made by July 31, or in two equal installments, one payable by July 31 and the other payable by December 31, if the remaining appropriation is less than or equal to $500,000, except in cases where the normal conditions of the grant dictate a different payment schedule.

b) The payment of principal and interest on the bonded debt or other bonded obligations of the Commonwealth, its agencies and its authorities, or for payment of a legally authorized deficit.

c) The payments for care of graves of Confederate and historical African American dead.

d) The employer contributions, and employer-paid member contributions, to the Social Security System, Virginia Retirement System, Judicial Retirement System, State Police Officers Retirement System, Virginia Law Officers Retirement System, Optional Retirement Plan for College and University Faculty, Optional Retirement Plan for Political Appointees, Optional Retirement Plan for Superintendents, the Volunteer Service Award Program, the Virginia Retirement System's group life insurance, sickness and disability, and retiree health care credit programs for state employees, state-supported local employees and teachers. If the Virginia Retirement System Board of Trustees approves a contribution rate for a fiscal year that is lower than the rate on which the appropriation was based, or if the United States government approves a Social Security rate that is lower than that in effect for the current budget, the Governor may withhold excess contributions. However, employer and employee paid rates or contributions for health insurance and matching deferred compensation for state employees, state-supported local employees and teachers may not be increased or decreased beyond the amounts approved by the General Assembly. Payments for the employee benefit programs listed in this paragraph may not be delayed beyond the customary billing cycles that have been established by law or policy by the governing board.

e) The payments in fulfillment of any contract awarded for the design, construction and furnishing of any state building.

f) The salary of any state officer for whom the Constitution of Virginia prohibits a change in salary.

g) The salary of any officer or employee in the Executive Department by more than two percent (irrespective of the fund source for payment of salaries and wages); however, the percentage of reduction shall be uniformly applied to all employees within the Executive Department.

h) The appropriation supported by the State Bar Fund, as authorized by § 54.1-3913, Code of Virginia, unless the supporting revenues for such appropriation are estimated to be insufficient to pay the appropriation.

7. The Governor is authorized to withhold specific allotments of appropriations by a uniform percentage, a graduated reduction or on an individual basis, or apply a combination of these actions, in effecting the authorized reduction of expenditures, up to the maximum of 15 percent, as prescribed in subdivision 6a of this subsection.

8. Each nongeneral fund appropriation shall be payable in full only to the extent the nongeneral fund revenues from which the appropriation is payable are estimated to be sufficient. The Governor is authorized to reduce allotments of nongeneral fund appropriations by the amount necessary to ensure that expenditures do not exceed the supporting revenues for such appropriations; however, the Governor shall take no action to reduce allotments of appropriations for major nongeneral fund sources on account of reduced revenues until such time as a formal written re-estimate of revenues for the current and next biennium, prepared in accordance with the process specified in § 2.2-1503, Code of Virginia, has been reported to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance, House Finance, and House Appropriations Committees. For purposes of this subsection, major nongeneral fund sources are defined as Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund and Transportation Trust Fund.

9. Notwithstanding any contrary provisions of law, the Governor is authorized to transfer to the general fund on June 30 of each year of the biennium, or within 20 days from that date, any available unexpended balances in other

funds in the state treasury, subject to the following:

a) The Governor shall declare in writing to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees that a fiscal emergency exists which warrants the transfer of nongeneral funds to the general fund and reports the exact amount of such transfer within five calendar days of the transfer;

b) No such transfer may be made from retirement or other trust accounts, the State Bar Fund as authorized by § 54.1-3913, Code of Virginia, debt service funds, or federal funds; and

c) The Governor shall include for informative purposes, in the first biennial budget he submits subsequent to the transfer, the amount transferred from each account or fund and recommendations for restoring such amounts.

10. The Director, Department of Planning and Budget, shall make available via electronic means a report of spending authority withheld under the provisions of this subsection to the Chairmen of the Senate Finance and House Appropriations Committees within five calendar days of the action to withhold. Said report shall include the amount withheld by agency and appropriation item.

11. If action to withhold allotments of appropriation under this provision is inadequate to eliminate the imbalance between projected general fund resources and appropriations, the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall be advised in writing by the Governor, so that they may consider requesting a special session of the General Assembly.