

*Report of the
House Appropriations
Subcommittee*

on

Natural Resources



House Bill 1500

February 6, 2005

**Respectfully Submitted by the House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Natural Resources:**

M. Kirkland Cox, Chairman

J. Paul Councill, Jr.

James H. Dillard, II

Jackie T. Stump

Harvey B. Morgan

Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr.

Clarke N. Hogan

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

on

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

As we reviewed the funding proposed for the Natural Resource agencies in House Bill 1500, this subcommittee was fully aware that the federal and state water quality regulations would require that more be done to address water quality. The subcommittee was also cognizant of the fact that while a number of state parks and park facilities had increased, staffing and other operational expenses had been reduced in response to the Commonwealth's budget shortfalls. This subcommittee, therefore, quickly and unanimously determined that now was the time to address these issues. I am glad to report that we were more than able to meet this objective.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for your leadership on many of the issues this subcommittee considered and for your commitment to establishing this subcommittee's recommendations as a funding priority. I would also like to thank the other subcommittee chairmen for their support of our efforts to preserve Virginia's natural resources. Because of your support, I am able to report to you today that this subcommittee has recommended an increase of approximately 50 percent in the level of support currently provided to Natural Resources programs.

Specifically, pursuant to the provisions of HB 1277, this subcommittee is recommending the appropriation of \$50 million in fiscal year 2006 to reduce the nutrient pollution created by wastewater treatment plants. These funds will be deposited into the Water Quality Improvement Fund for use by the Department of Environmental Quality in providing financial assistance grants to these plants for the installation of nutrient removal technology. Furthermore, our recommendations will prioritize the distribution of these grants to en-

sure that the worst polluting plants are the first plants to be cleaned up.

In addition, the subcommittee is recommending that 70 percent of any year-end surplus deposited into the Water Quality Improvement Fund be dedicated for use in controlling nonpoint source pollution, especially nonpoint source pollution stemming from agricultural practices. This recommendation will increase the amounts provided for nonpoint source pollution by \$6.5 million. The subcommittee is also recommending the restoration of \$20,000 for water quality monitoring on Smith Mountain Lake.

The subcommittee is recommending that the Commonwealth increase operational support for our state parks. Many times, this committee has wisely supported investing in the creation of new state parks or the construction of revenue-producing facilities such as cabins and campgrounds. The subcommittee believes it is now time to invest in the staffing and equipment needed to maintain the Commonwealth's capital investments. The subcommittee is recommending an additional \$1.8 million in general fund support for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to add 30 positions for the state parks system and \$500,000 for the purchase of \$2.3 million in equipment through the Master Equipment Lease Program. Another \$250,000 is provided to increase staffing in the agency's erosion and sediment control program. These positions will be responsible for reviewing the adequacy of local erosion and sediment control programs and providing technical assistance to localities.

Finally, the subcommittee is also recommending \$250,000 be provided to the Marine Resources Commission for use by the City of Petersburg to support the dredging of the city's harbor by the Army Corps of Engineers. This project will reopen the city's harbor to navigation and spur economic development in one of Virginia's most distressed cities.

Following the staff explanation of our amendments, we hope it will be the pleasure of the Committee to adopt our recommendations.

House Bill 1500**Amendment****2004-06 BIENNIAL TOTAL**

General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	FTE
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Department Of Conservation And Recreation

"Friend of the Chesapeake" License Plates	0	439,433	0.00
Agricultural Best Management Practices	6,475,600	0	0.00
Erosion and Sediment Control Positions	250,000	0	0.00
Master Planning for Pinnacles State Park	Language	0	0.00
State Parks Staffing	1,750,000	250,000	30.00
State Parks Equipment Lease	500,000	0	0.00

Department Of Environmental Quality

Wastewater Treatment Plant Funding	50,000,000	0	0.00
WQIF Surplus Reversion	(6,475,600)	0	0.00
Eliminate Water Supply Planning	(701,510)	0	(3.00)
Smith Mountain Lake Water Quality Monitoring	20,000	0	0.00

Department Of Historic Resources

State Archaeologist	96,000	0	1.00
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Marine Resources Commission

Appomattox River Dredging Project	250,000	0	0.00
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Part 3/Part 4

Game Protection Fund Transfer	Language	0	0.00
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Total Natural Resources

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