

SENATE BILL NO. _____ HOUSE BILL NO. _____

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 2.2-302.1, relating to duties of Virginia Liaison Office; efforts to permit off-shore surveying for potential natural gas resources.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 2.2-302.1 as follows:

§ 2.2-302.1. Efforts to allow off-shore natural gas surveying.

A. In addition to its responsibilities enumerated in § 2.2-302, the Office shall work with the members of the State Congressional Delegation and executive agencies to develop and enact federal legislation, or take appropriate federal executive action, that would provide an exemption to the moratorium that prevents until 2012 any surveying of potential natural gas deposits in areas off the Commonwealth's Atlantic shore that are under federal jurisdiction. The requested exemption to the moratorium will:

1. Permit surveying, mapping and other exploratory activities intended to provide information regarding the potential of economically-recoverable off-shore natural gas deposits of natural gas;

2. Not authorize natural gas drilling or recovery operations; and

3. Not authorize drilling or other exploratory activity within the Chesapeake Bay.

B. The Office shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the chairs of Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor and the House Committee on Commerce and Labor, no later than January 1 of each year, that summarizes the status of the moratorium, efforts by Congress and executive agencies to provide an exemption to the moratorium as described in subsection A, and activities by the Office in furtherance of this section.

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