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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1029**

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 8 of Chapter 5 of Title 29.1 a section numbered 29.1-580, relating to Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund; established.*

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Committee Referral Pending

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

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 8 of Chapter 5 of Title 29.1 a section numbered 29.1-580 as follows:**

**§ 29.1-580. Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund.**

A. *There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller. All funds appropriated for such purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds received on its behalf shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely for the purposes of funding high priority projects as set forth in the Plan, or high priority projects submitted for review pursuant to Fund guidelines. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the Director.*

B. *The Department shall develop guidelines for the competitive award of grants from the Fund. Local governments, the Department of Transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, regional transportation authorities, port authorities, and Tribal Nations shall be eligible to apply for grants for projects that reduce vehicle accidents involving animals, improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, or leverage public funding for such projects.*

C. *The Director shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1 of each year. The report shall include the number and types of public and private funding opportunities sought for the Fund; the amount of public funding received by the Fund; the amount and number of awards from the Fund; and information regarding the progress of projects funded by the Fund, including data on use of project infrastructure by wildlife.*

**2. The Department of Transportation, the Department of Forestry, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Department of Wildlife Resources shall actively seek public and private resources for the Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund, including applying for funding through the federal Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program.**

INTRODUCED

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