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HOUSE BILL NO. 250

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 11, 2022

A BILL related to the mining and processing of certain minerals and elements; study; permitting.

Patron—Simonds

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, and the Secretary of Commerce and Trade shall establish a work group to study the mining and processing of copper, zinc, and lead in the Commonwealth. The work group shall include representatives from the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice established pursuant to Article 36 (§ 2.2-2699.8 et seq.) of Chapter 26 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia, as well as representatives from environmental organizations; potentially impacted localities with significant deposits of gold, copper, zinc, or lead; and Native American communities located in potentially impacted localities. The work group shall also include experts in mining, hydrology, toxicology, geology, and public health. No member of the work group shall have any economic interest in a company that profits from the mining, processing, or sale of gold, copper, zinc, or lead.*

§ 2. *The work group shall (i) evaluate the impacts of the mining and processing of copper, zinc, and lead on public health, safety, and welfare in the Commonwealth; (ii) evaluate whether existing air and water quality regulations are sufficient to protect air and water quality in the Commonwealth from the mining and processing of copper, zinc, and lead, including evaluating the impacts of different leaching and tailings management techniques on downstream communities; (iii) evaluate whether existing bonding, reclamation, closure, and long-term monitoring of sites for such mining and processing are sufficient; and (iv) report its findings to the General Assembly no later than December 1, 2023.*

§ 3. *Until July 1, 2024, the Department of Energy shall not issue any new permit to operate a mine for gold, copper, zinc, or lead of an area larger than 10 acres in the Commonwealth.*

INTRODUCED

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