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House Republicans Approve Comprehensive Alternative Energy and Conservation Package

-- Renewable Sources Promoted without Raising Consumer Rates or Business Costs --

-- Legislation to Reduce Consumption, Improve Efficiency Receive Bipartisan Endorsement --

RICHMOND, VA – In the latest announcement by House Republicans of practical solutions to improve the economic climate in the Commonwealth, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates William J. Howell (R-Stafford) and Delegates Terry G. Kilgore (R-Scott), Clarke N. Hogan (R-Halifax) and John A. Cosgrove (R-Chesapeake) today applauded the final approval of a comprehensive package of legislation that will promote energy conservation and efficiency as well as the development and delivery of alternative energy sources.

The full House passed energy bills put forth by Republicans and Democrats, whose highlights include:

- Helping Virginia conserve 10% or more of its electricity consumption in future years and keep prices competitive through reduced demand and improved efficiency;
- Creating new jobs by breaking down barriers in order to encourage fiscally responsible alternative energy generation;
- Supporting the development of new renewable energy projects across Virginia to ease reliance on foreign oil and other energy sources; and
- Helping to keep energy costs to consumers low without adding business regulations and mandates.

"Encouraging the cost-effective development and responsible production of economically viable alternative energy resources in Virginia will help secure our energy independence and reduce our reliance on foreign oil to meet our energy needs," noted Speaker Howell. "The series of common-sense measures successfully advanced by House Republicans this Session will help address Virginia's demand for increased energy production in an environmentally sensitive manner. This sensible package of reforms, including partnering with our fine public institutions of higher education and the Tobacco Commission, will create critical new jobs in the alternative energy arena that will make significant progress in alleviating Virginia's energy needs."

[House Bill 2404](#), patroned by Delegate Bell, creates the Virginia Universities Clean Energy Development and Economic Stimulus Foundation to assist in identifying and administering the development of alternative energy sources to create jobs and promote energy independence. Many of Virginia's colleges and universities already are pioneering work on alternative energy and will be key partners with the Foundation, along with others. Likewise, private sector experts will be involved in determining the economic impact of individual projects and provide insight into creating a comprehensive alternative energy research and development program for the Commonwealth.

[House Bill 2531](#), patroned by Delegate Kilgore, establishes a meaningful and measurable energy conservation and demand-side management program under the careful direction of the State Corporation Commission. These programs aimed at reducing energy consumption by electricity consumers would be cost-effective for the producers while protecting rate payers across Virginia. The legislation does not employ mandates and burdensome regulations that tie the hands of businesses to achieve the same positive results as will occur under this bill.

“With the growing understanding of Virginians for the need to conserve energy use, House Republicans have taken a responsible approach to ensure continued progress in reducing demand,” said Delegate Kilgore, Chairman of the House Commerce and Labor Committee. “My bill recognizes that the private sector has the ability to create innovative products and services to help all consumers conserve. And, the legislation is able to protect consumers from being harmed through increases energy costs during this economic downturn.”

Several bills, including [House Bill 2172](#), [House Bill 2175](#), [House Bill 2268](#), [House Bill 2152](#) and [House Bill 2371](#), break down barriers that currently exist to developing renewable energy projects in Virginia. House Bill 2172 would make it easier for renewable energy projects to connect into the electrical grid in order to share energy resources with Virginia consumers. House Bill 2175 would provide a programmatic incentive for small renewable energy production by streamlining the permitting process. House Bill 2268, patroned by Delegate Charles D. Poindexter (R-Franklin), expands the definition of renewable energy to encourage new alternative energy projects with greater use of organic, biomass sources to meet rising energy demand. House Bill 2152, patroned by Thomas D. Rust (R-Fairfax), provides for relief from capacity charges that discourage renewable generation. House Bill 2371, patroned by Delegate David A. Nutter (R-Montgomery), promotes the use of renewable energy through the development of dynamic rates for larger, nonresidential customers who use the output from a renewable generation facility.

“Virginia has an abundance of natural resources that can be used to develop environmentally-friendly energy and improve our economic situation,” said Delegate Hogan, patron of House Bills 2172 and 2175. “It makes good business sense for the Commonwealth to reduce the burdens of those seeking to produce renewable energy and supply that valuable commodity into the marketplace. These bills foster an improved business climate so the use of innovative alternative energy sources continues, expands and creates new jobs.”

[House Bills 2001](#) and [2002](#), patroned by Delegate Cosgrove, encourage the use of biofuels as part of Virginia’s overall approach to delivering energy. House Bill 2001 expands the Biofuels Production Incentive Grant Program to include advanced biofuels derived from renewable biomass or algae. House Bill 2002 recognizes and encourages the reliance on sustainably produced biofuels made from traditional agricultural crops and supports the delivery infrastructure needed for statewide distribution of these advanced biofuels to Virginia consumers.

“Expanding the feedstocks used to produce biofuels in Virginia will improve the comprehensive approach we have taken in delivering alternative energy to our citizens and businesses,” remarked Delegate Cosgrove. “Using sustainable sources grown and found in Virginia helps create local jobs in this cutting-edge field. Providing incentives to harness these natural resources stimulates innovation and economic development.”

[House Bill 1633](#), patroned by Delegate Chris Saxman (R-Staunton) dedicates royalties from the from exploration of domestic energy sources that will create local jobs to transportation improvements, Chesapeake Bay clean-up, renewable energy research and home energy assistance.

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