

## Department of Planning and Budget 2024 Session Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB357

**House of Origin**     Introduced     Substitute     Engrossed  
**Second House**     In Committee     Substitute     Enrolled

2. **Patron:**    Simonds

3. **Committee:** Rules

4. **Title:**    Department of Environmental Quality; protection of existing tidal and nontidal wetlands.

5. **Summary:** Directs the Department of Environmental Quality to establish a work group to develop (i) strategies for protecting the existing tidal and nontidal wetlands of the Commonwealth and (ii) plans for wetland restoration and creation to address losses and adverse impacts from human activities and climate change. The bill specifies that such work group shall include certain relevant stakeholders and will focus on (a) evaluating existing approaches to wetland conservation strategies in the Commonwealth and other states, (b) identifying wetlands adaption areas where tidal wetlands can persist in the landscape, and (c) exploring the circumstances in which climate can impact the wetlands' health and survival. The bill requires the work group to report its findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources by December 1, 2024.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** No.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary. See item 8.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** It is anticipated that any fiscal impact on the Department of Environmental Quality as a result of this bill can be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill requires that the workgroup include relevant stakeholders, including academic institutions such as the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, local governments or regional planning commissions, and state agencies such as the Department of Wildlife Resources, Marine Resources Commission, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. It is anticipated that any fiscal impact on stakeholder agencies that may result of this bill can be absorbed within agencies' existing resources.

9. **Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Environmental Quality; Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Department of Wildlife Resources; Marine Resources Commission; and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

**11. Other Comments:** None.