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Governor Signs Bills to Streamline Regulations, Uphold Professional Standards

RICHMOND, April 18—In a meaningful step toward streamlining regulatory processes, Governor Glenn Youngkin has signed into law three bills affecting the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, signaling a commitment to fostering economic growth while upholding standards of professionalism and public safety.

In order to avoid potential burdens on thousands of individuals and firms engaged in home renovation and painting projects across Virginia, House Bill 1005 and Senate Bill 560, sponsored by Delegate David Owen and Senator Travis Hackworth, repeal the Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) program. Enacted in 2009, the program tasked the Virginia Board for Asbestos, Lead, and Home Inspectors with implementing federal regulations—diverting resources and increasing bureaucratic hurdles for businesses and contractors.

Since 2009, four administrations, both Democratic and Republican, have declined to implement the Lead RRP program, citing concerns over its substantial economic impact on residents and its limited value in mitigating risk to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Upon repeal, the Environmental Protection Agency will continue to administer the program in Virginia, ensuring that public safety standards are upheld. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that states where the Environmental Protection Agency administers the program exhibit lower lead exposure rates in children compared to those with state-administered programs.

"The repeal of the Lead RRP program will ensure that our state remains business friendly as Virginia's licensed professionals continue to adhere to the strict public safety standards established by the EPA," said Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation Director Kishore Thota. "In removing unnecessary regulatory burdens, we are promoting policies that allow professionals to thrive without compromising the well-being of our communities."

House Bill 350, also sponsored by Delegate David Owen, will make two key changes to the Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors,

Certified Interior Designers, and Landscape Architects. Firstly, it reduces the quorum requirement for the number of engineers, architects, and land surveyors needed at regularly scheduled board meetings. Secondly, it eliminates the mandate that licenses must be signed by at least four members of the board. These adjustments will enhance the efficiency of the board's operations, enabling it to better serve Virginia residents.

Building upon the success of the Universal License Recognition program, implemented in the summer of 2023, House Bill 1182 addresses certification requirements for Virginia's voluntary Professional Wetland Delineator Certification to align with the ULR statute. Introduced by Delegate N. Baxter Ennis, these changes aim to reduce barriers to entry and maintain standards for wetlands professionals.

ULR has already allowed more than 300 professionals from a range of occupations in states across the nation to bring their talents to Virginia. Learn more about Virginia's ULR program at: dpor.virginia.gov/Applicants/ULR.

The Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation is an executive branch agency that oversees 18 regulatory boards and programs. Through its boards, the agency regulates more than 320,000 individuals and businesses categorized in hundreds of license types. DPOR protects the health, safety and welfare of the public by licensing qualified individuals and businesses and enforcing standards of professional conduct.