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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 335

Offered January 24, 2000

Commending the International Paper Company.

Patrons—Barlow, Councill and Jones, S.C.

WHEREAS, Hurricane Floyd struck Virginia on September 16, 1999, causing disastrous flooding in Southside Virginia, especially in Southampton County and the City of Franklin; and

WHEREAS, the flooding demolished or severely damaged virtually every business and home in downtown Franklin and the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, the International Paper Company owns and operates a paper mill, particle board plant, and lumber mill in Franklin which collectively employ more than 2,400 Virginians; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Floyd flooded more than two-thirds of International Paper's operations in Franklin; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Executive Officer of International Paper, John Dillon, traveled to Franklin on September 21, 1999, to reassure the residents and community leaders that International Paper was committed to repairing the damage and restoring full operating capacity; and

WHEREAS, John Dillon also met with company employees and union representatives to reassure them that International Paper was committed to rebuilding and to advise them that all employees scheduled to work when Hurricane Floyd hit would be paid for a full week's work; and

WHEREAS, International Paper provided immediate assistance to its neighbors in the form of bottled water and lent the services of its medical team to a local resident experiencing premature labor, which required transport by boat to a waiting ambulance; and

WHEREAS, International Paper assisted local officials in establishing the Franklin Area Flood Relief Fund, Incorporated, for the purpose of ensuring that donations by businesses and citizens would be immediately channeled into relief efforts; and

WHEREAS, International Paper contributed \$250,000 to the relief fund, and, to date, more than \$4 million has been contributed by businesses, citizens, and friends throughout Virginia; and

WHEREAS, International Paper provided office space for the Virginia Employment Commission to accept applications for unemployment benefits for the residents of Franklin; and

WHEREAS, International Paper reassured the Secretary of Commerce and Trade of its commitment to rebuilding and kept the Administration informed of progress and developments; and

WHEREAS, International Paper boosted the repair efforts by transferring to Franklin more than 50 employees and by securing the services of more than 500 suppliers and contractors from across the country; and

WHEREAS, many of the employees of the paper mill, particle board complex, and lumber mill sustained devastating personal losses in the flooding, yet they worked endless hours to restore full operation to the facilities; and

WHEREAS, the costs to repair the damage to International Paper's facilities exceeded \$60 million; and

WHEREAS, the first of five paper machines was restarted on the evening of October 10, 1999, and during the ensuing two weeks, all five machines were brought on line; and

WHEREAS, the paper mill returned to its pre-flood production level of producing 2,000 tons of first-grade product per day on October 27, 1999, and has since continued these production levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the International Paper Company and its employees on their commitment and efforts to rebuild the company's operations in Franklin following the severe damage caused by Hurricane Floyd; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the International Paper Company as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and gratitude for the company's successful efforts on behalf of the people of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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