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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 545

Offered January 10, 2001

Prefiled January 3, 2001

Extending state recognition to the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, Inc.

Patron—Pollard

Referred to Committee on General Laws

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has extended official state recognition to eight tribes native to the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution 97 of the 1982 General Assembly established a Joint Subcommittee Studying Relationships Between the Commonwealth and Native Indian Tribes to consider claims that various Virginia tribes had continued their existence; and

WHEREAS, the 1983 General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Joint Subcommittee gave official state recognition in House Joint Resolution 54 to six tribes native to Virginia, namely the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, and Pamunkey; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly subsequently extended recognition to the Nansemond and Monacan tribes, through 1985 House Joint Resolution 205 and 1989 House Joint Resolution 390, respectively, after those tribes sought recognition and documented that they had continuously occupied their ancestral areas, maintained tribal social and cultural institutions, and existed under an established tribal government; and

WHEREAS, the first documented contact between Europeans and Rappahannocks dates to at least May 5, 1607, when Master George Percy wrote that the Chief of the Rappahannocks invited European explorers to his village; and

WHEREAS, in addition John Smith documented his visit with the Rappahannocks during his exploration of the Rappahannock River in 1608; and

WHEREAS, further documentation is found in the "Confirmation of Treaty" dated May 24, 1658, between the Rappahannocks and Colonel Moore Fauntleroy; and

WHEREAS, the Rappahannocks signing the treaty were located in the Northern Tidewater region in what is now Richmond County, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Rappahannocks continued to follow the river and settled at various sites along the Rappahannock River; and

WHEREAS, many descendents of the Rappahannock people living in Essex and Caroline counties were never recognized as members of any existing Rappahannock Tribes; and

WHEREAS, these descendents of the Rappahannock people formed the Tri-county Rappahannock Indian Tribe, also known as the Rappahannock-Portobago Indian Tribe, and established a Tribal Council; and

WHEREAS, on September 22, 1981, the Tri-county Rappahannock Indian Tribe was issued a certificate of incorporation by the State Corporation Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Tri-county Rappahannock Indian Tribe was in existence and organized prior to the Commonwealth's initial recognition of Virginia Indian tribes in 1983; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the tribe changed its name to the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, Inc. maintains an existence separate from any other Rappahannock Indian Tribe; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly of Virginia recognize the existence within the Commonwealth of the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, Inc.

INTRODUCED

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