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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 445

Offered February 13, 2009

Commending Farm Fresh Food and Pharmacy.

Patrons—Northam, Blevins, Locke, Miller, Y.B. and Norment; Delegates: Cosgrove, Gear, Hamilton, Iaquinto, Jones, Knight, Mathieson, Melvin, Miller, P.J., Oder, Pogge and Spruill

WHEREAS, Farm Fresh Food and Pharmacy is committed to responsible stewardship by reducing the use of plastic bags and encouraging customers to switch to reusable bags as the best choice for the environment; and

WHEREAS, each year, an estimated 500 billion to one trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide, totaling over one million bags per minute, and plastic bags end up as harmful litter in the environment each year; and

WHEREAS, this consumption can create environmental challenges, including pollution and wind-blown litter, significant resource consumption (primarily oil), and threats to wildlife; and

WHEREAS, plastic bags are among the 12 items of debris most often found in coastal cleanups, according to the nonprofit Center for Marine Conservation; and

WHEREAS, debris such as plastic bags remains one of the most pervasive and visible reminders that the Chesapeake Bay is in need of restoration and improved stewardship to address the less visible pollution in Virginia waterways, namely excess nutrients that fuel the growth of dense algae blooms, rob the water of oxygen, and destroy underwater bay grasses, crabs, and oysters; and

WHEREAS, Farm Fresh Supermarkets, based out of Hampton Roads, has taken a leadership position and worked with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to develop a reusable shopping bag program; and

WHEREAS, Farm Fresh rewards the consumer by making the reusable bags available at a very affordable price at 45 stores located in Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Smithfield, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Grafton, Williamsburg, Hayes, Virginia, and Elizabeth City, North Carolina, and by offering a nickel refund on grocery bills for each bag used; and

WHEREAS, Farm Fresh gives back to the Bay each time a bag is used in stores as the company makes a five-cent donation for each bag used to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for its Hampton Roads environmental education, restoration, and advocacy programs; and

WHEREAS, Farm Fresh Supermarkets collectively sold 81,265 reusable bags in the initial 12 months of the innovative program, and reusable bags were used at Farm Fresh stores 456,743 times in 2008, preventing more than 538,008 plastic grocery bags from ending up in Virginia's waste stream or as litter in Virginia's communities and natural areas; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commend Farm Fresh Food and Pharmacy for its exceptional environmental leadership; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Farm Fresh Food and Pharmacy as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude to the organization for its commitment to reducing plastic bag use by encouraging customers to switch to reusable bags to benefit the environment and Virginia's communities.

INTRODUCED

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