

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 150

Extending state recognition to the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2010
 Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2010

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

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 97 (1982) 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 Session of the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the joint subcommittee, gave official state recognition in House Joint Resolution No. 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 House Joint Resolution No. 205 (1985) and House Joint Resolution No. 390 (1989), respectively, once those tribes sought recognition and documented that they had occupied their ancestral areas continuously, had maintained tribal social and cultural institutions, and had an established tribal government; and

WHEREAS, the 1982 joint subcommittee reported historical references and other indications of the existence of the "Potomac" tribe in and around Stafford County but stated that no evidence had been presented to it during its study to document recognition for that tribe; and

WHEREAS, the Patawomeck, or Patawomeke, tribe, also referred to as the Potomac tribe, was situated in and around Pasapatanzy and Indian Point in what is now Stafford County, and occupied a prominent place in the documented history of the first half-century of European contact with the Native Virginians; and

WHEREAS, in official records, references to the tribe cease after the mid-1660s, for it was at that time that hostilities between the colonial government and the tribe resulted in the death of most men of the tribe, while its women and children were either taken in by settler families, went into hiding, or were enslaved; and

WHEREAS, long-standing oral history, as well as family, church, land, and other records, maintain that several families native to the Patawomeck ancestral area trace their lineage to the tribe; and

WHEREAS, there are other persuasive indications of the continuous existence of the Patawomeck in Stafford County, such as ongoing social and economic relationship, as well as intermarriage, with recognized tribes such as the Pamunkey; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Frank G. Speck, one of the most noted early twentieth century scholars of Virginia's Indians, accepted the Indian ancestry of the "Potomac band," and, while stating that there was not clear proof at the time of his study to establish their descent from the Patawomeck, expressed his opinion that the "considerable folklore and some ethnological survivals may be expected to reward the labor of the patient investigator"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. W.L. Deyo took up that challenge, subsequently spending 30 years documenting that the Patawomeck tribe survivors remained in Stafford County and tracing the ancestry of several families in the area back to the original Patawomeck; and

WHEREAS, the documentation amassed by Dr. Deyo, past president of the Virginia Genealogical Society, and other scholars is sufficient to establish the claims of the Patawomeck tribal descendants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That from and after the effective date of this Resolution, the General Assembly of Virginia extend state recognition to the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia and with this, grants the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia, representation on the Virginia Council on Indians; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to Chief Robert "Two Eagles" Green of the Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia, requesting that he further disseminate copies of this resolution to his constituents so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly of Virginia, by this resolution, does not address the question of whether the tribe has been continuously in existence since 1776; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Commonwealth, by this resolution does not confirm, confer or address in any manner any issues of sovereignty.