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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10**

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled December 21, 2011

*Commending the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center.*

Patron—Knight

WHEREAS, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center celebrates 25 years of providing an enriching educational experience for visitors, promoting the study and conservation of marine environments, and contributing to the economic well-being of the Virginia Beach area; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1986 in partnership with the City of Virginia Beach, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center has grown to a 129,000-square-foot facility that contains 360 interactive exhibits and 800,000 gallons of aquariums; and

WHEREAS, over the past 25 years, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center has welcomed 11 million visitors, one million of whom are students, making it the Commonwealth's most popular nonhistorical, nonprofit tourist attraction; and

WHEREAS, visitors to the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center enjoy a wide variety of immersive exhibits that feature the aquatic plant and animal life that exists in bay, marsh, and ocean environments; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center features the nation's only interactive Seal Splash activity, an in-water experience that allows visitors to learn more about harbor seals in the animal's environment, and operates boat trips to watch for dolphins and learn more about natural marine habitats; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center's Ocean in Motion vehicle has traveled around the Commonwealth and to neighboring states to allow over 337,000 students to view live marine animals and participate in hands-on activities; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center also serves as a leader in conservation efforts with its Stranding Response Program, which rescues, rehabilitates, and collects information from stranded marine life; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center remains committed to conserving the Commonwealth's natural resources, receiving Virginia Green certification and working with the local community to encourage recycling and waterway cleanups; and

WHEREAS, a vital part of the Virginia Beach community, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center works with local libraries to encourage ocean literacy, partners with local parks and recreation departments to offer summer educational programs, and collaborates with area hotels and restaurants to enhance the visitor experience; and

WHEREAS, for the past 25 years, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center has played a vital role in conserving the Commonwealth's rich marine ecosystems through its educational and research efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center on the occasion of its 25th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for the Center's dedication to encouraging the preservation of marine environments through education and research.

INTRODUCED

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