

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 315

Commending Marc Edwards.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2016
Agreed to by the Senate, March 3, 2016

WHEREAS, Marc Edwards, a respected scientist and activist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, prompted government action on the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, saving lives through his committed advocacy; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the City of Flint changed the source of its drinking water from Lake Huron to the Flint River, leading to dangerous levels of lead contamination that have been linked to serious health complications, an outbreak of Legionnaire's disease, and at least 10 deaths; and

WHEREAS, facing opposition from city officials, a Flint resident contacted Marc Edwards, after she learned of his previous efforts to ensure government transparency and accountability on water quality and water infrastructure, including his work to expose lead contamination in Washington, D.C., and prove the dangers of lead contamination to children; and

WHEREAS, Marc Edwards and a team of researchers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) discovered that drinking water in Flint contained double the lead content of toxic waste; and

WHEREAS, Marc Edwards and his team traveled to Flint four times to analyze tap water from homes and businesses and confirm their initial findings; the team also sent out 300 home testing kits, nearly all of which were returned; and

WHEREAS, Marc Edwards, an environmental engineering professor who also teaches a course on heroism and ethics at Virginia Tech, received an emergency grant from the National Science Foundation and spent nearly \$150,000 of his discretionary research funding and personal money to carry out and publicize the tests; and

WHEREAS, Marc Edwards and his team filed Freedom of Information Act requests, held news conferences, and created a website to raise awareness among the general public and the national media, which eventually resulted in Flint reconnecting its previous water source; and

WHEREAS, despite the team's efforts, the water infrastructure in Flint remains severely damaged and the health of the city's residents may be compromised for years to come; Marc Edwards was appointed by the Governor of Michigan to the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee, a 17-person team of experts tasked with creating a viable, long-term strategy to address the ongoing crisis; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Marc Edwards for his courageous work to raise national awareness of the water crisis in Flint, Michigan; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Marc Edwards as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his passionate advocacy for those in need and commitment to strengthening the nation's water infrastructure.

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