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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 385

Offered March 1, 2016

*Commending the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.*

Patrons—Peace; Senator: Lewis

WHEREAS, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, known today as the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, has worked to document and protect the tangible history and cultural resources of Virginia for 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office began with the creation of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission in 1966, after Congress and the President enacted the National Historic Preservation Act, establishing the nation's legal framework for the protection and preservation of historic buildings, landscapes, and archaeological discoveries; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources replaced the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission as the State Historic Preservation Office; and

WHEREAS, under the National Historic Preservation Act, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office is an active partner in the National Register of Historic Places, diligently working with Virginia property owners and localities for 50 years to successfully nominate nearly 3,000 individual sites and historic districts in Virginia to the National Register, which nationwide includes more than 90,000 historic properties; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth leads the country in the number of National Register rural historic districts with 31 listed; and

WHEREAS, beyond its National Register resources, Virginia boasts dozens of sites accorded the highest honor that a United States Secretary of Interior can bestow on a resource through designation as a National Historic Landmark, of which those in Virginia include Fort Monroe, the Alexandria Historic District, Monticello, Montpelier, the Pentagon, the University of Virginia Historic District, and the Williamsburg Historic District, among others; and

WHEREAS, the Department is nationally recognized as a leader in historic preservation for its successful administration of many programs including the Commonwealth's sister program to the National Register, the Virginia Landmarks Register, which contains more than 3,050 listings and the state's Historical Highway Marker Program; and

WHEREAS, created in 1926, the Commonwealth's Historical Highway Marker Program is one of the oldest such programs in the country, with the first signs erected in 1927 on Route 1 between Richmond and Alexandria, and now features more than 2,500 markers reflecting the full spectrum of Virginia's diverse history; and

WHEREAS, through Virginia's longstanding and innovative historic easement program, the Board of Historic Resources holds approximately 597 easements on more than 39,000 acres of land, including more than 12,000 acres of Civil War battlefields, thereby preserving in perpetuity sites essential to Virginia's heritage from its prehistory and into the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, the Archaeological Collections of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources contain more than 6,000,000 artifacts spanning thousands of years of human history; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources released the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System, an online survey and GIS-based research tool with a comprehensive and growing inventory of more than 200,000 buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites of historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural interest; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources administers a state historic rehabilitation tax credit program that has revived, recycled, and repurposed thousands of historic buildings through more than 2,300 projects and generated over 31,000 jobs between 1997 and 2013; and in 2014, the Commonwealth ranked first in the nation in the number of historic preservation projects certified for federal rehabilitation tax credits; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources also assesses, under the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review Process, approximately 4,000 projects annually to determine their impact on historic resources; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources partners with 34 localities in the Certified Local Government Program, which provides federal funding for preservation projects; and

WHEREAS, heritage tourism is a critical component of the Commonwealth's economy, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources is an active partner in Preservation50, an effort to celebrate, learn from and leverage the first five decades of the National Historic Preservation Act and work to ensure a strong future for historic preservation; now, therefore, be it

INTRODUCED

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59       RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby  
60 commend the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be  
61 it

62       RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution  
63 for presentation to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as an expression of the General  
64 Assembly's admiration for the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office's mission to foster and support  
65 good stewardship of the Commonwealth's significant architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources.