

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Commending Richmond International Raceway.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 21, 2016
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016

WHEREAS, Richmond International Raceway celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2016 of providing an unparalleled and unique stock car racing experience for both fans and drivers; and

WHEREAS, Richmond International Raceway (RIR) started in 1946 when a 1/2-mile racetrack was built at the Atlantic Rural Exposition fairgrounds in Henrico County; the first race at the dirt track was held on October 12, 1946; and

WHEREAS, RIR hosted the first National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) Grand National Division race on April 19, 1953; Lee Petty won the race with an average speed of 45.535 mph, and since then, the historic track has been home to thrilling NASCAR contests of skill, speed, and technical prowess; and

WHEREAS, today, RIR is the oldest active NASCAR Sprint Cup Series track on the East Coast and is one of the most important racing venues in the Commonwealth; in its lifetime RIR has undergone four name changes and five configuration changes, and the original dirt track is now an asphalt surface; and

WHEREAS, racing fans have flocked to RIR for its twice-yearly race weekends since 1959; the track's current configuration is a 3/4-mile layout—the only one in NASCAR—and the D-shaped oval, built in 1988, combined with lights that were added in 1991, allows RIR to host popular nighttime races; and

WHEREAS, the semiannual NASCAR Doubleheader race weekends feature the XFINITY and Sprint Cup Series; the events attract thousands of fans to the Commonwealth year after year, many of whom stay on site or close by to be part of the excitement, camaraderie, and world-class racing experience; and

WHEREAS, the first 2016 NASCAR Doubleheader weekend at RIR will be held in the spring when the track will host its 120th Sprint Cup Series race on April 24; through the years, more than 480 drivers have competed in Sprint Cup races at RIR; and

WHEREAS, stock car racing enthusiasts eagerly anticipate NASCAR racing at RIR; the historic track is one of the most popular racing venues for racing buffs and drivers, featuring the excitement of side-by-side racing, and allows drivers to reach speeds usually seen at large speedways—all of which results in unforgettable experiences for the many devotees of the sport; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Richmond International Raceway on the occasion of its 70th anniversary in 2016; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dennis Bickmeier, president of Richmond International Raceway, as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations for its many years of offering world-class stock car racing in the Commonwealth and providing lasting memories for thousands of fans.

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