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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 131

Offered February 6, 2017

Commending the Virginia Department of Forestry.

Patron—Chafin

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 1914, Virginia created the Office of the State Forester, under the State Geological Commission; and

WHEREAS, the original charge of the office was to "ascertain the best methods of reforestation cut-over and denuded lands, foresting waste land, preventing the destruction of forests by fire, the administering of forests on forestry principles, the instruction and encouragement of private owners in preserving and growing timber for commercial and manufacturing purposes, and the general conservation of forest tracts around the headwaters on the watersheds of all water courses of the state"; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has more than 16 million acres of forestland that provide the residents of the Commonwealth with clean air, clean water, recreational opportunities, habitats for wildlife, and aesthetic beauty; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's forest resources generate an economic impact of more than \$17 billion each year and employ more than 103,000 people in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Forestry has been actively preventing and suppressing wildfires for more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Forestry's special forest wardens battle more than 875 wildfires that burn a total of 12,260 acres of woodlands in the Commonwealth each year on average; and

WHEREAS, during 2016, the Virginia Department of Forestry protected 2,510 homes and other structures, worth more than \$144 million, from the 656 wildfires that burned more than 24,000 acres of forestland; and

WHEREAS, during the most recent fall wildfire season, the Virginia Department of Forestry's wildland firefighters responded to 190 wildfires that burned 16,836 acres of woodlands, mostly in Southwest Virginia, and protected 856 homes and other structures valued at \$45 million; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Virginia Department of Forestry hereby be commended for its excellence in wildfire prevention and suppression; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Bettina Ring, the state forester, as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for appreciation for the Virginia Department of Forestry's effective and efficient wildfire protection efforts.

INTRODUCED

SR131