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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 95

Offered January 10, 2018

Prefiled January 9, 2018

*Designating the last full week of June, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Pollinator Awareness Week in Virginia.*

Patrons—Guzman, Boysko, Gooditis, Hurst, Lopez, Rodman and Tran

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, one-third of all crop production in the United States is at least partially dependent on pollinators, with honey bees accounting for approximately \$15 billion in contributions to the food economy through natural pollination; and

WHEREAS, in the Commonwealth, apples, pumpkins, cucumbers, squash, and blueberries are dependent on pollinators to fully develop their fruits; other crops, such as soybeans, sunflowers, and peanuts, derive significant benefits from pollinators; and

WHEREAS, native and commercial bee populations are drastically declining due to disease, habitat loss, and the use of pesticides; research also indicates that biodiversity plays an essential role in the health of bee colonies; and

WHEREAS, more than 32 percent of honey bee colonies in the Commonwealth were reported lost during the winter of 2015-2016, when freezing temperatures affected major nectar-producing plants; poor nectar sources continued into the summer of 2016, when high temperatures prevented many plants from producing nectar; and

WHEREAS, many foods and natural remedies that contain honey have become scarcer and costlier due to the loss of bee colonies and other pollinators; in 2016, honey production in the Commonwealth was valued at \$1.1 million, down 12 percent from 2015; and

WHEREAS, bees are important to Virginia not just for honey or medicine, or even as pollinators of crops, but because they are a vital part of the Commonwealth's ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, pollinator gardens can be established to include pollinator-friendly plants, human-made bee colony structures, bee baths, and drip irrigation in order to provide areas where bees can flourish and repopulate; and

WHEREAS, bees need help and protection, as they do not have a voice of their own, and all Virginians are encouraged to learn more about natural pollinators and the important role that they play in agriculture and food production; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the last full week of June, in 2019 and in each succeeding year, as Pollinator Awareness Week; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services so that the agency may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this week on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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