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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 118

Offered February 2, 2021

Commending Richmond Raceway.

Patron—McClellan

WHEREAS, in 2021, Richmond Raceway celebrates its 75th anniversary of providing an unparalleled and unique stock car racing experience for both fans and drivers; and

WHEREAS, Richmond Raceway traces its roots to 1946 when a half-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, Richmond Raceway hosted its first National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) Grand National Division race on April 19, 1953, where future NASCAR Hall of Fame-inductee Lee Petty won the race with an average speed of 45.535 miles per hour; since then, the historic track has been home to numerous thrilling NASCAR contests of skill, speed, and technical prowess; and

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

WHEREAS, racing fans have flocked to Richmond Raceway for its twice-yearly race weekends since 1959; the track's current configuration, built in 1988, is a three-quarter-mile-long, D-shaped oval, the only such track in NASCAR; lights were added 30 years ago in 1991, allowing Richmond to host popular nighttime races; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Richmond Raceway partnered with Henrico County and the Commonwealth to complete the redevelopment of the historic infield, now known as the FanGrounds, making it one of the most fan-friendly infields in motorsports; and

WHEREAS, semiannual NASCAR race weekends feature the NASCAR Cup Series and either the NASCAR Xfinity Series or NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, and in 2021, Richmond Raceway welcomes back the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour for the first time since 2002; and

WHEREAS, Richmond Raceway's events attract thousands of spectators to the Commonwealth year after year, many of whom stay on site or in hotels throughout the greater Richmond region to be part of the excitement, camaraderie, and world-class racing experience; millions more fans have viewed events at Richmond Raceway on national broadcast television; and

WHEREAS, stock car racing enthusiasts eagerly anticipate NASCAR racing at Richmond Raceway since the historic track is one of the most popular racing venues for racing fanatics and competitors, featuring the excitement and challenge of side-by-side racing; the track configuration allows drivers to reach speeds usually seen at large speedways, resulting in unforgettable experiences for the many devotees of the sport; and

WHEREAS, in addition to NASCAR races, hundreds of trade shows, concerts, and other events, the Richmond Raceway complex provides entertainment experiences for local residents and people from many states, delivering a strong economic impact for the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Richmond Raceway hereby be commended on the occasion of its 75th anniversary in 2021; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Jim France, chair and chief executive officer of NASCAR, Lesa Kennedy, executive vice chair of NASCAR, and Dennis Bickmeier, president of Richmond Raceway, as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's congratulations and admiration for its many years of offering world-class stock car racing in the Commonwealth and providing lasting memories for thousands of fans.

INTRODUCED

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