

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 769

Commending the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2023

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2023

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, a nonprofit, multistate organization dedicated to ensuring the health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, has been a regional and national leader in environmental education since the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation began its environmental education programs in 1973, and the following year the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Virginia developed its first educational program on the Commonwealth's rivers and streams with one teacher and about a dozen canoes; and

WHEREAS, for 50 years, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has provided meaningful watershed educational experiences to more than 1.5 million students and thousands of teachers; environmental education programs have reached schools in rural, urban, and suburban communities across the watershed, about 25 percent of which are under-resourced; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance and support of state agencies and officials in Virginia, and in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Department of Education, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs reach more than 10,000 teachers and students in the Commonwealth each year; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs offer meaningful experiences like field trips, teacher training, curriculum materials, and restoration programs that have inspired generations of citizens to become lifelong stewards of the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs create opportunities to link the natural environment with everyday life, enabling students and teachers to conduct their own research, use critical thinking skills, and gain a valuable perspective on the relationship between water quality, fisheries, and economics; courses combine many academic disciplines and are structured to support the Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation operates seven environmental education programs for middle and high school-aged students; two residential programs on an island, two boat programs, two canoe programs, and the student leadership summer program; The Foundation also provides professional development for teachers through Chesapeake Classrooms, a year-long program that offers several options, including a five-day immersion course, grant writing training, classroom curriculum development, and standards-based, meaningful watershed experiences; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has established deep partnerships with rural, urban, and suburban school districts, as well as many private schools across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Governor Robert F. McDonnell recognized the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs with the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award; the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has also received two of the nation's top environmental honors, the President's Environment and Conservation Challenge Medal, and the National Geographic Society Chairman's Award; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has led efforts to educate students, teachers, and residents of the Commonwealth for 50 years and is dedicated to increasing knowledge about the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay, a national treasure and one of the Commonwealth's greatest natural resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's environmental education programs on their anniversary for five decades of outstanding service to the public in the Commonwealth and the Chesapeake Bay watershed; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Peggy Sanner, the Virginia executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the Foundation's contributions to students, teachers, and local residents through its environmental education programs.

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