

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 322

Commending Washington Dulles International Airport.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 16, 2023
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 2023

WHEREAS, for 60 years, Washington Dulles International Airport has enhanced the transportation sector in the Commonwealth, providing a critical gateway to the nation's capital and serving as an important economic driver in the region; and

WHEREAS, Dulles International Airport traces its history to the end of World War II when rapid growth in the Washington, D.C., area necessitated the creation of a second airport to complement what is now Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed the Washington Airport Act in 1950 to provide for the creation of such an airport; in 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower selected the 10,000-acre site in Fairfax County and Loudoun County that would become known as Dulles International Airport; and

WHEREAS, Dulles International Airport was the first airport in the nation designed specifically for commercial jets, and 7,000 acres of the 10,000-acre site were intended to serve as a buffer between the airport and the surrounding area, much of which was farmland at the time; and

WHEREAS, the engineering firm of Ammann and Whitney of New York was selected as the primary contractor for planning, design, and construction supervision of Dulles International Airport; Burns and McDonnell of Kansas City handled the design of the mechanical, electrical, and utility installations, while Ellery Husted of Washington, D.C., served as the master planning consultant; and

WHEREAS, Eero Saarinen and Associates of Connecticut was selected as the architect for the design of the control tower, service buildings, and terminal building, which ultimately became a well-known landmark for travelers worldwide and received a First Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects; the original cost of the terminal was \$108.3 million; and

WHEREAS, Dulles International Airport held its grand opening on November 17, 1962, and dedication ceremonies included remarks by President John F. Kennedy and former President Dwight D. Eisenhower; the airport was a symbol of the stature and progress of the United States at the outset of the jet age and was named in honor of the late John Foster Dulles, who served as Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959; and

WHEREAS, through the end of 1962, Dulles International Airport served more than 52,000 travelers, including local residents, tourists, government officials, diplomats, and foreign dignitaries; passengers were delighted by the visually striking design of the tower and terminal building and the airport's unique mobile lounge vehicles that offered an unparalleled level of comfort and luxury between the terminal and a waiting aircraft; and

WHEREAS, by 1966, Dulles International Airport was serving more than one million passengers each year, and in 1977, the airport completed work on its first expansion; the airport continued to grow through the 1970s and 1980s, with the terminal building developing along the lines of the visionary original plan by Eero Saarinen and Associates; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, the airport was renamed Washington Dulles International Airport; and

WHEREAS, between 1985 and 1987, passenger traffic at Washington Dulles International Airport doubled from five million travelers to 10 million; the airport launched a major development program in the 1990s, and in 1999, the airport conducted nearly 470,000 aircraft operations and served 19.8 million passengers, including more than 3.5 million international passengers; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority has operated Washington Dulles International Airport and what is now Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport since 1987; and

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2022, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority officially welcomed the Washington Metro Silver Line, which connects rail stations at Washington Dulles International Airport with stations in Loudoun and Fairfax counties and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Washington Dulles International Airport remains one of the busiest airports on the east coast of the United States and is one of the fastest growing airports in the world; and

WHEREAS, after several expansions, the current land area of Washington Dulles International Airport is 11,184 acres, with approximately 3,831 acres in use for aircraft operations and four runways; the main terminal has grown from 600 feet in length with 500,000 square feet to 1,240 feet in length with 1.1 million square feet; and

WHEREAS, Washington Dulles International Airport is a gateway to the world for Virginians, offering nonstop flights to 40 world capitals, with plans to add service to Berlin, Germany, in the summer of 2023; and

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WHEREAS, Washington Dulles International Airport has played an essential role in the economic vitality of Northern Virginia, providing approximately 14,000 direct jobs and billions of dollars in business revenue, and the Dulles Corridor has become synonymous with growth and future potential for the region; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate its milestone anniversary, Washington Dulles International Airport created a special exhibit with photographs and other historical artifacts for visitors to explore the creation and growth of the airport; and

WHEREAS, the Committee for Dulles hosted a gala event in November 2022 to celebrate the history and achievements of Washington Dulles International Airport with current and former airport employees and community partners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Washington Dulles International Airport on the occasion of its 60th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to John Potter, president and chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the history of Washington Dulles International Airport and admiration for its importance to the region and the Commonwealth.