

## 2013 SESSION

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### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 559

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled November 29, 2012

*Commending Billy Apperson.*

Patron—Pogge

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson, a 50-year employee of the Virginia Department of Forestry, retired in 2012 after a remarkable career devoted to the wise stewardship of Virginia's forests and the preservation and restoration of the longleaf pine tree; and

WHEREAS, the longleaf pine tree, which covered more than a million Virginia acres when Captain John Smith arrived at Jamestown, became almost extinct by the mid-1800s after colonists used the wood for ship masts, lumber, pitch, tar, and turpentine; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson, through his service with the Virginia Department of Forestry, has worked diligently for decades to restore the tree, which has both economic and ecological benefits; and

WHEREAS, today, about 200 native longleaf pines can be found across the state with the largest concentration, about 75 specimens, near South Quay, which is located south of Franklin; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson has played a pivotal role in the protection and restoration of the longleaf pine tree; his efforts have led to a new grafting technique and genetic studies and research finding that the purely Virginia tree has higher survival rates than longleaf pines from other states; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson worked to ensure the construction of access roads to the trees at South Quay, arranged for foresters and volunteers to collect seeds from the trees, and developed a plan for distribution of native Virginia longleaf pine seedlings to individuals to plant on their property; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson also once went up 70 feet in a bucket truck to hand pollinate an isolated tree and joined with other foresters in donating his own personal funds to save some of the rare pines from being timbered; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson has also worked for the improvement of the Atlantic white cedar tree and restoration of the American chestnut tree; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated forester, Billy Apperson has made many valuable contributions to the Commonwealth over his half a century of service; and

WHEREAS, Billy Apperson was honored for his contributions to restore the longleaf pine tree with the naming of the South Quay property as the W.L. (Billy) Apperson Longleaf Pine Forest; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Billy Apperson on the occasion of his retirement from the Virginia Department of Forestry and on his efforts to bring back the longleaf pine tree; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Billy Apperson as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and appreciation for his extraordinary commitment to Virginia's great forests.

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