

# 2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5071

*Commending Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments.*

Agreed to by the Senate, September 18, 2014

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, September 18, 2014

WHEREAS, between November 2012 and April 2013, Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments worked diligently and bravely to respond to a series of arson fires throughout Accomack County; and

WHEREAS, over the course of nearly six months, two arsonists set 77 fires, destroying abandoned houses, vehicles, cabins, storage sheds, billboards, tire piles, an airplane hangar, and an abandoned hotel and attempting to destroy other structures, including a church and an occupied home; and

WHEREAS, at the height of the incidents, the all-volunteer fire departments of the Eastern Shore were often tasked with responding to multiple fires in one day and had to modified firefighting methods to ensure that incidents were dealt with safely and efficiently; and

WHEREAS, members of the Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments cooperated with local law enforcement and Virginia State Police in an effort to bring the investigation to a successful conclusion; the fires ceased after two suspects were apprehended in April 2013; and

WHEREAS, Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments—New Church, Greenbackville, Chincoteague, Atlantic, Saxis, Bloxom, Parksley, Tasley, Onancock, Melfa, Wachapreague, Painter, Community (Exmore), Cheriton, Cape Charles, Northampton (Nassawadox), Eastville, and Onley—exhibited professionalism and dedication while fighting the arson fires or providing support to other volunteer fire companies engaged in fighting the fires; and

WHEREAS, the NASA Wallops Flight Facility Fire Department, Oak Hall Rescue, Accomack County Department of Public Safety, Department of Forestry, and Eastern Shore of Virginia 911 Communications Center also played crucial roles in protecting the community during this period; and

WHEREAS, this series of events is a reminder of the dangers courageously faced by firefighters, first responders, and law-enforcement officers in the fulfillment of their mission to safeguard the lives and property of the citizens of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend these Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments for their coordinated and selfless response to a series of arson fires in Accomack County between November 2012 and April 2013; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to these Eastern Shore volunteer fire departments as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the departments' tireless dedication to the members of the Eastern Shore community.

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