

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 179

*Commending Joe Elton.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 29, 2016  
Agreed to by the Senate, February 4, 2016

WHEREAS, it is not uncommon for a gifted individual to discover his vocation only after detours and even defeats within the personal and professional pilgrimages of life; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton was summoned to Virginia three decades ago, from the Commonwealth's former territory now constituting the State of Ohio, to assume leadership of one of the two principal political parties comprised of Virginian citizens; and

WHEREAS, in August 1994, Joe Elton was named the sixth director of Virginia State Parks, a system established on June 15, 1936, and built during the Great Depression by the federal Civilian Conservation Corps; and

WHEREAS, during Joe Elton's 21-year tenure as Director of Virginia State Parks, the system's programs and facilities have earned national recognition and the Gold Medal Award among all such programs in the Union "for excellence in parks and recreation management" from the National Recreation and Park Association; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton has overseen the most dynamic growth and development in the history of Virginia State Parks, which now number 36 operating state parks—with six new parks in planning or development stages; and

WHEREAS, as director Joe Elton led efforts to form such advocacy groups as the Virginia Association for Parks, conceived and developed the Virginia Youth Conservation Corps, served from 2009 through 2011 as leader of the National Association of State Parks Directors, and served, too, as a founding member and president of the American State Parks Foundation; and

WHEREAS, for these endeavors and many other achievements Joe Elton in 2012 was presented the Distinguished Service Award of the Society of Recreation Professionals and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Association of Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton is a graduate of Ohio State University and of the Commonwealth Management Institute and the Virginia Executive Institute, both within the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton has served Virginia, too, as a Commissioner on the Governor's Commission on Citizen Empowerment, for which, at the behest of Governor George Allen in 1994, he wrote the report that is not only the foundation for welfare reform within the Commonwealth but a model adopted by many States of the Union; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton will retire from public service on March 1, 2016, as Deputy Director of Operations for the Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, Joe Elton in his many endeavors has blessed Virginians and citizens of many other states with memorable experiences of the natural wonders and resources that are one of the bountiful blessings of the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Joe Elton for his exemplary service to the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Joe Elton, a resident of Powhatan County, as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his long and faithful stewardship of the renowned Virginia State Parks.

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