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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 420

Offered March 2, 2016

Commending Falkland Farms.

Patrons—Edmunds; Senator: Ruff

WHEREAS, Falkland Farms, a 7,673-acre tract of land in Halifax County, works to conserve its diverse outdoors habitat for the benefit of wildlife, and the 12-square-mile property, much of which has been left in its natural state, features diverse topography, habitat, soils, forests, and water features; and

WHEREAS, in the early 20th century, Col. Ira Vaughan purchased more than 40 farms to create Falkland Farms as a private hunting preserve; today, it is the Commonwealth's largest contiguous privately owned parcel of real estate east of the Blue Ridge Mountains; and

WHEREAS, Falkland Farms is owned by Ira Vaughan's descendants, who maintain it as a hunting plantation; Sydnor House Lodge on the property also is used year-round as a bed-and-breakfast accommodation and hosts weddings, receptions, and corporate retreats; and

WHEREAS, keenly aware of the property's diverse natural resources, the owners of Falkland Farms are actively engaged in conservation efforts; the site contains bottomland hardwoods, pine savannahs, hardwood forests, cropland, pastures, managed wetlands, and wildlife plots; and

WHEREAS, Falkland Farms' property also includes more than six miles of frontage along the Dan, Bannister, and Hyco Rivers and contains three miles of shoreline at the headwaters of the John H. Kerr Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, numerous ponds and streams run through Falkland Farms, and the farm also contains two rare vernal ponds, which provide habitat for several uncommon animal species; and

WHEREAS, abundant wildlife and game are found at Falkland Farms, including deer, turkey, bear, quail, and waterfowl, and fishing is plentiful on the waterways that border the property; the farm is in the core area of a large complex of protected conservation lands and directly adjoins thousands of acres of protected lands; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1990s, the owners of Falkland Farms once again turned it into an active business enterprise by reviving the hunting plantation and starting a beef cattle operation; Sydnor House Lodge also was completely renovated; and

WHEREAS, visitors to Falkland Farms, boaters, and people traveling to nearby Staunton River State Park can enjoy a magnificent viewshed that highlights some of the Commonwealth's outstanding natural beauty—open space, farmland, forests, wetlands, streams, and shorelines; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the owners of Falkland Farms for their outstanding conservation efforts; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the owners of Falkland Farms as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for its far-sighted commitment to conservation and natural resource protection.

INTRODUCED

HJ420