

17103109D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 640

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 10, 2017

Designating the last Saturday in September, in 2017 and in each succeeding year, as Public Lands Day in Virginia.

Patron—Lopez

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, public lands in Virginia, including parks, wilderness and wildlife management areas, gardens, historical sites, and other types of land, provide residents and visitors with opportunities to enjoy nature, protect and preserve diverse natural resources, and contribute to the economic vitality of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is home to 37 Virginia State Parks and 22 National Parks, offering thousands of campsites, hundreds of cabins, more than 500 miles of trails, and convenient access to the Commonwealth's waterways; and

WHEREAS, Virginia State Parks showcase a wide variety of flora, fauna, and geological formations, all of which are a part of the Commonwealth's unique heritage, and conservation efforts on public lands help ensure that future generations can enjoy these irreplaceable natural resources; and

WHEREAS, public lands help families in the Commonwealth lead healthy, active lifestyles, and many children first discover the natural world at public lands while camping and exploring with outdoor organizations like the Boy Scouts of America or on school trips; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries maintains 41 wildlife management areas, comprising 200,000 acres of land open to the public for wildlife-related recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, and trapping; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the Public Access Lands for Sportsmen program has opened more than 30,000 acres of private land in Dickenson County and Wise County and 260 acres in James City County for public use; and

WHEREAS, outdoor recreation activities in the Commonwealth generate \$13.6 billion in consumer spending, support 138,000 direct jobs, and account for \$3.9 billion in wages and salaries and \$923 in state and local tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, public lands promote good stewardship and recognition of public ownership, and enrich the lives of all Americans through collaboration between residents, land managers, and community leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the last Saturday in September, in 2017 and in each succeeding year, as Public Lands Day in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries so that members of the agencies may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this day on the General Assembly's website.