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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 926

Offered February 10, 2017

Commending Boy Scouts of America Troop 301 of Coeburn.

Patrons—Kilgore, O'Quinn and Pillion; Senators: Carrico and Chafin

WHEREAS, Boy Scouts of America Troop 301 of Coeburn, including member and Eagle Scout candidate Daniel Rose, are working with the International Dark-Sky Association to create a dark sky park at Bark Camp Lake in the Clinch Ranger District of the Jefferson National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the International Dark-Sky Association is a United States-based nonprofit organization incorporated in 1988 by professional and amateur astronomers to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and the world's heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting; and

WHEREAS, community-based support for the Bark Camp Lake Dark Sky Park designation has poured forth from the local academic, business, civic, government, spiritual, and youth communities by way of letters and resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Bark Camp Lake Dark Sky Park designation in 2017 may be launched by a Thomas Jefferson Dark Sky Festival to bring together amateur astronomers and youth to explore more about the spectacular starry night sky, the miracles and wonders of nature that abound in dark skies, and the human-made objects that are sometimes visible with unaided eyes; and

WHEREAS, local volunteers are working with the region's youth to expand knowledge and understanding of earth and space science, remote sensing, meteorology, amateur astronomy observations, model rocketry, remotely operated unmanned aerial systems, student space station experiments, student and NanoSats, as well as how to establish the Bark Camp Lake Dark Sky Park; and

WHEREAS, coordinating with Boy Scouts of America Troop 301 of Coeburn, local volunteers have donated light meters and a Celestron telescope, conducted surveys of the lighting fixtures for retrofitting and repairs, and donated software to make videos to promote Bark Camp Lake as a dark sky location; and

WHEREAS, the publicly owned Bark Camp Lake is an excellent site for astronomical observations, with few impediments to accessing the sky and many surrounding natural treasures encircling the lake along the Thomas Jefferson Scenic Byway Loop, designated by the 2016 Session of the Virginia General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Bark Camp Lake location ranks well on the Bortle scale, and it is typical for a rural area enclosed by national forest with light suitable for the indigenous wildlife of the central Appalachian Mountains of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the splendors of a starry dark sky have been filling humans with wonder since the dawn of civilization and it is important in modernity to recognize the tremendous value of a clear, dark sky to observe the Milky Way and other celestial bodies across the night sky; and

WHEREAS, many of the Commonwealth's finest citizens have volunteered to boost the educational, cultural, scenic, and natural resources that the International Dark-Sky Association seeks to share and preserve at Bark Camp Lake; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Boy Scouts of America Troop 301 of Coeburn, including Eagle Scout candidate Daniel Rose, for its work to advance the Bark Camp Lake Dark Sky Park project; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Boy Scouts of America Troop 301 of Coeburn, the International Dark-Sky Association, and the United States Forest Service Clinch District Ranger as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for their dedication to saving the dark sky for observation of the greatest wonders and mysteries through the epochs of time.

INTRODUCED

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