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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 346

Offered February 1, 2021

Commending John T. Wells.

Patrons—Norment and Mason; Delegate: Hodges

WHEREAS, John T. Wells, esteemed dean and director of The College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, will retire on June 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, John Wells took the helm at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in 2004, bringing 25 years of experience as a marine geologist that included faculty positions at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Louisiana State University and a 15-year tenure as editor of *Marine Geology*; and

WHEREAS, as dean and director of VIMS, John Wells has been the driving force behind one of the nation's leading marine research facilities and education centers, overseeing more than 400 faculty, staff, and students across three campuses and an annual operating budget of \$52 million; and

WHEREAS, with its mission to advance research, educate students and citizens, and provide advisory service to policymakers and the public, John Wells has helped make VIMS an integral member of the Commonwealth's efforts to ensure the health and longevity of its marine resources; and

WHEREAS, under John Wells' leadership, VIMS has vastly enhanced its research efforts through the construction of new laboratories and campus facilities, including the launch of its state-of-the-art flagship vessel, the *Virginia*, which provides scientists with an unparalleled ability to study the Commonwealth's coastal areas and waterways; and

WHEREAS, John Wells has placed great emphasis on education during his tenure at VIMS, securing 37 privately funded fellowships to attract top graduate students to The College of William and Mary and establishing a new master's program to prepare the next generation of marine science leaders; and

WHEREAS, in tandem with The College of William and Mary's *For the Bold* fundraising campaign, John Wells raised over \$26 million on behalf of VIMS, enabling the institution to remain at the forefront of marine science for years to come; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the need for greater representation in the marine science community, John Wells established a diversity and inclusion committee at VIMS, supporting greater involvement of minority groups and providing a sterling model for other institutions to follow; and

WHEREAS, with a mandate for VIMS to study the Commonwealth's marine resources and advise its policymakers, John Wells has been central to several major state-level decisions and developments over the past two decades that protected Virginia's waterways and supported its various coastal industries; and

WHEREAS, fusing his gifts for research and policy, John Wells was key to the establishment of the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency, a partnership between VIMS, The College of William and Mary, and Old Dominion University that employs academic research to address the threat of sea level rise and recurrent flooding; and

WHEREAS, through his dedicated and visionary leadership at VIMS, John Wells has ensured the health and sustainability of the Commonwealth's marine resources, as well as the communities that depend on them, for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend John T. Wells, dean and director of The College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, on the occasion of his retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to John T. Wells as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his meritorious career and best wishes for the future.

INTRODUCED

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