

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 216

Commending William C. Baker.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2022
 Agreed to by the Senate, February 24, 2022

WHEREAS, for 40 years, beginning in 1982, William C. Baker served as president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the largest nonprofit conservation organization dedicated solely to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, under William Baker's leadership, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's work to "Save the Bay" has benefited the Chesapeake Bay and all of its tributary rivers and streams by helping to restore them through education, advocacy, restoration, and litigation; and

WHEREAS, under William Baker's leadership, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's efforts to reduce pollution to waterways in Virginia has led to measurable improvements in water quality and benefited the economy and quality of life for residents throughout our Commonwealth and region; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his four decades of leadership, William Baker worked closely with state and federal elected officials, partner organizations, and residents throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed to bring about scientifically sound programs and ensure adequate investments in a vibrant bay and clean environment for future generations; and

WHEREAS, under William Baker's leadership the Chesapeake Bay Foundation helped lay the foundation for federal and regional state partners to make progressively stronger commitments to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay in the Chesapeake Bay Agreement of 1983, the 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement, and the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement; and

WHEREAS, under William Baker's leadership, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation was instrumental in the development and adoption by federal and state partners of the 2010 Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load and the state watershed implementation plans (collectively known as the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint) by which all partners agreed to implement by 2025 the practices necessary to achieve restoration; and

WHEREAS, during William Baker's tenure, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation worked to support the Chesapeake Bay's myriad marine species, including oysters, menhaden, and striped bass, as well as other essential species like underwater grasses; and

WHEREAS, William Baker oversaw the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's efforts to advance environmental justice by working to protect members of local communities from disproportionate harm from pollution; and

WHEREAS, William Baker guided the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to work toward addressing the causes and deleterious effects of climate change on the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, under William Baker's leadership the Chesapeake Bay Foundation educated and inspired the next generation of leaders by providing more than one million meaningful watershed environmental education experiences to students, teachers, and adults in Virginia and across the Chesapeake Bay region; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of William Baker the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and state and local partners began an effort to add 10 billion oysters to the Chesapeake Bay's waters and 10 million new trees within the watershed region by 2025; and

WHEREAS, William Baker is rightly known throughout the Commonwealth and the Chesapeake Bay watershed region as a strong, dedicated, and visionary leader who has recognized the urgency of restoring the Chesapeake Bay and whose leadership has been instrumental in inspiring Virginia and federal and regional partner states to keep on the path to saving this national treasure; and

WHEREAS, William Baker retired from his outstanding career with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation at the end of 2021, and he left the organization and his successor, Hilary Harp Falk, well-prepared to lead the effort to ensure a legacy of cleaner water in the Chesapeake Bay and the Commonwealth's rivers and streams for future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend William C. Baker for his immense contributions to the Chesapeake Bay and to the Commonwealth and its residents; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to William C. Baker as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his personal and professional achievements.

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