

# 2022 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 787

*Commending Somerton Friends Meeting.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, September 7, 2022

WHEREAS, Somerton Friends Meeting, a church of the Religious Society of Friends in Suffolk and one of the oldest churches in the country, celebrates its 350th anniversary in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the origins of Somerton Friends Meeting can be traced to a missionary trip made by George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends, who are also commonly known as the Quakers, to the Commonwealth and North Carolina in 1672; and

WHEREAS, inspired by this visit, Quakers in the Nansemond County area joined together to establish Somerton Friends Meeting, conducting their worship services first in private homes and later in a meetinghouse built by the congregation; and

WHEREAS, founded 70 years before a settlement at Suffolk was officially established, Somerton Friends Meeting is regarded as the oldest active Quaker meeting in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, after the original meetinghouse burned down in 1866, Somerton Friends Meeting constructed a new building on the same site three years later, which continues to serve as the congregation's meeting site to this day; and

WHEREAS, in honor of its place in the history of the Commonwealth, a Virginia Department of Historic Resources historic marker detailing Somerton Friends Meeting was erected in 2015 along U.S. Route 58; and

WHEREAS, Somerton Friends Meeting will commemorate its anniversary on September 24 and 25, 2022, with various activities, including a 17th century-style worship ceremony and guest lectures; and

WHEREAS, by providing its members with uplifting spiritual guidance and ample opportunities for community outreach for more than three centuries, the Somerton Friends Meeting has helped to make Suffolk a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Somerton Friends Meeting hereby be commended on the occasion of its 350th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Richard Wilcox, pastor of Somerton Friends Meeting, as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the church's history and its contributions to the Commonwealth.

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