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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 551

Offered January 14, 2023

Commending Karen Pallansch.

Patrons—Bennett-Parker and Herring; Senator: Surovell

WHEREAS, in 2023, Karen Pallansch, a clean water professional, will retire as general manager and chief executive officer of AlexRenew, a publicly owned advanced water resource recovery public utility company in Alexandria, after nearly 30 years of exceptional service and leadership; and

WHEREAS, a native of Philadelphia, Karen Pallansch holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and Texas A&M University-Texarkana, respectively; in the 1980s, she worked for the United States Department of the Army on research, design, and construction projects in China, where she gained an appreciation for the importance of environmental improvements and pollution control; and

WHEREAS, Karen Pallansch returned to the United States and settled in the Commonwealth and joined the Department of Environmental Quality as a senior environmental engineer; she was responsible for implementing the requirements of federal environmental statutes, as well as construction inspections and funding management; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Karen Pallansch was hired as a staff engineer at the Alexandria Sanitation Authority and subsequently worked her way up through the ranks, serving as director of engineering and technical services, director of treatment, and director of environmental services; and

WHEREAS, Karen Pallansch became the general manager and chief executive officer of the Alexandria Sanitation Authority in 2005 and ably oversaw day-to-day operations, maintenance, fiscal management, regulatory functions, and human resources; she worked diligently to ensure that the utility had access to the latest technology and best practices to serve the community in an efficient and effective manner; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Karen Pallansch led efforts in 2012 to rebrand the Alexandria Sanitation Authority as Alexandria Renew Enterprises, better known as AlexRenew, to reflect the organization's evolving mission and further emphasis on resource recovery and good environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, as general manager and chief executive officer, Karen Pallansch has led a team of more than 100 AlexRenew employees, who contributed to the reclamation of 13 billion gallons of wastewater in Alexandria and Fairfax County each year; and

WHEREAS, under Karen Pallansch's leadership, AlexRenew assumed responsibility for one of the largest infrastructure projects in Alexandria history, the \$615 million RiverRenew program, which will curb the existing combined sewer overflow system and prevent an estimated 120 million gallons of sewage-tainted stormwater from entering local waterways each year and is scheduled for completion in 2025; the project has remained on track despite a federal government shutdown, a pandemic, and supply chain issues; and

WHEREAS, Karen Pallansch has guided the program from its inception, including by holding an online contest for members of the public to name the project's 380-ton digging machine, now known as "Hazel" after environmental justice advocate Hazel Johnson; and

WHEREAS, over the course of her career, Karen Pallansch skillfully interfaced with experts, government officials, and other stakeholders; she also implemented Water Discovery Days, a popular annual open house program at the 35-acre facility, to interface with and educate members of the public; and

WHEREAS, a highly qualified professional, Karen Pallansch has been a national leader in water reclamation and has offered her expertise to many national organizations, including as a board member for the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Pool, president of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, board member of the WaterReuse Association, and chair of the former Water Environment and Reuse Foundation, now the Water Research Foundation; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades over the course of her career, Karen Pallansch was named as the 2017 Northern Virginian of the Year by *Northern Virginia Magazine*, and she was the first female winner of the annual award presented by *Water Finance & Management Magazine* in 2018; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Karen Pallansch on the occasion of her retirement as general manager and chief executive officer of AlexRenew; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Karen Pallansch as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her

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**59** achievements in service to the residents of Alexandria and Fairfax County.