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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 540

Offered January 23, 2025

*Commending Busch Gardens Williamsburg.*

Patrons—Green; Senator: Diggs

WHEREAS, since 1975, Busch Gardens Williamsburg in James City County has delighted visitors from throughout the Commonwealth and the nation with its thrilling roller coasters, riveting attractions, and unique shows and events; and

WHEREAS, originally known as Busch Gardens: The Old Country, Busch Gardens Williamsburg was developed in the early 1970s as part of a development investment project by Anheuser-Busch, which included the amusement park, the Kingsmill Resort complex, and other residential and office properties, along with its new brewery; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg first adopted its current name in 1993, but was briefly known as Busch Gardens Europe from 2006 to 2008; the park is divided into 10 hamlets that represent interpretations of villages in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, and Italy, as well as a children's area based on Sesame Street and a fantasy area, the Land of Dragons; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg features dozens of rides, including several notable roller coasters, along with shows and cuisine that reflect the themes of each hamlet; guests can stroll from hamlet to hamlet, enjoying the carefully crafted scenery, or travel between different areas of the park via the Aeronaut Skyride gondola lift or the Busch Gardens Railway; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg is also known for its animal attractions, including horse stables, an aviary, and Jack Hanna's Wild Reserve, which encompasses thousands of square feet of natural habitat for wolves and bald eagles in addition to viewing areas; over the years, the park has committed to environmental protection and conservation through the adoption of electric vehicles, organic gardening, and the use of recycled materials; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg is open year-round with limited winter hours and offers beloved special events during Mardi Gras, Saint Patrick's Day, Oktoberfest, Halloween, and Christmas; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg has often been selected as one of the top amusement parks in the country according to surveys conducted by the National Amusement Park Historical Association and was voted as the Most Beautiful Park in 2023; and

WHEREAS, Busch Gardens Williamsburg welcomes millions of guests each year and is one of the primary economic engines in the region, sustaining thousands of local jobs and driving tourism that supports other local businesses and attractions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Busch Gardens Williamsburg, one of the Commonwealth's premier amusement parks, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Busch Gardens Williamsburg as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the park's contributions to generations of visitors and important role in the vibrant local economy.