

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 253

*Commending the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 13, 2025

WHEREAS, for 100 years, the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry has provided a link between the Virginia Peninsula and South Hampton Roads, serving as both a convenient method of transportation and a beloved reminder of local history; and

WHEREAS, for individuals living along the James River in James City County and Surry County, ferry service across the James River had been a hallmark of life in the region since the 1660s, but local captain Albert F. Jester made history in 1925 when he began offering an innovative ferry service that could transport automobiles; and

WHEREAS, Albert Jester's wooden ferry, the *Captain John Smith*, could carry 16 cars on its vehicle deck and as many as 100 passengers on its upper deck and complete the journey between Jamestown Island in James City County and the Scotland community in Surry County in a fraction of the time that it would take to drive; and

WHEREAS, Albert Jester continued to operate the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry until the mid-1940s, when it was purchased by the Virginia Department of Highways, now known as the Virginia Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, the *Captain John Smith* remained in use with the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry until it was sold in the 1950s, and a fleet of modern ships took its place to better serve the growing communities on both banks of the route; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Transportation removed tolls on the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry in 1997, and the service remains free to the public; the ferry operates 365 days a year and is the only 24-hour state-run ferry service in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry fleet is currently made up of four ships, the *Pocahontas* and the *Powhatan*, which can carry up to 70 vehicles, and the *Surry* and the *Williamsburg*, which can carry up to 50 vehicles; and

WHEREAS, on average, the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry transports 1.7 million passengers every year; and

WHEREAS, a ride on the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry, which takes between 15 and 20 minutes, provides a scenic view of the region and offers a unique connection to history, with many riders traveling between historic sites like the Jamestown Settlement, Bacon's Castle, Smith's Fort, and Chippokes Plantation and State Park; and

WHEREAS, the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry employs 90 individuals and has affected the growth of the local economy and community in many other ways, such as when Albert Jester's son-in-law, Wallace Edwards, began selling ham sandwiches on the ferry, leading to the creation of Edwards Virginia Smokehouse; the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry also inspired the country song "The Jamestown Ferry," which appeared on Tanya Tucker's debut studio album in 1972; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the Surry County Historical Society discovered that the original upper deckhouse of the *Captain John Smith* had been abandoned in Portsmouth; the restored deckhouse was opened as a museum in 2015 and will be upgraded as part of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry in 2025; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry hereby be commended for its service to generations of Virginians on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for its contributions to transportation infrastructure and important role in local life.

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