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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 111

Offered February 4, 2026

Commending the James River Association.

Patrons—Carr, Cousins, Lopez, McQuinn, Simon, Ward and Watts; Senators: Aird, Bagby, Jones, McDougle and VanValkenburg

WHEREAS, the James River, designated by the United States Congress as America's Founding River, is Virginia's largest watershed and a vital natural, historic, and economic resource, providing drinking water to more than one-third of Virginians, supporting industries, sustaining diverse wildlife, and offering recreational opportunities and scenic beauty that enrich the Commonwealth's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1976, the James River Association (JRA) was established at a time when the tidal James River was severely polluted and fishing was banned due to contamination and, since that time, has served as the guardian and voice of the James River, protecting and restoring its health for present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, JRA is the only nonprofit organization solely dedicated to the protection and restoration of the James River and its tributaries and works across its 10,000-square-mile watershed to protect the James River and connect people to it; and

WHEREAS, over five decades, JRA has led efforts to transform the James River from one of the most polluted rivers in the nation to one of the most improved, advancing water quality protections, restoring habitats for iconic species such as Atlantic sturgeon and bald eagles, and strengthening community and state initiatives to safeguard the river; and

WHEREAS, the health of the James River has steadily improved, as documented in JRA's latest State of the James biennial report, which gave it a grade in the "B" range and rated it as the healthiest major tributary to the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the James River was awarded the prestigious International River Foundation's Thiess International River Prize in recognition of JRA's restoration efforts and outstanding integrated river basin management; and

WHEREAS, JRA has been a leading advocate for policy and funding initiatives to improve river health through public education and community engagement, including the James RIVERKEEPER program, which monitors and responds to river conditions and water quality; and

WHEREAS, JRA has advanced conservation, restoration, and resilience efforts throughout the James River watershed, including by restoring streambanks and riparian buffers, installing living shorelines, expanding public access, and implementing projects that help mitigate flooding, manage stormwater, and improve water quality; and

WHEREAS, JRA has connected tens of thousands of students to the James River through multifaceted educational programs that enhance classroom learning with meaningful river-based watershed experiences and hands-on conservation activities that foster ecological understanding, river stewardship, and lifelong environmental literacy across generations; and

WHEREAS, JRA works collaboratively with state agencies, local governments, businesses, conservation partners, and community members while remaining an independent and trusted voice for the James River and promoting the connection between people and the river as a cornerstone of thriving communities throughout the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend and celebrate the James River Association on the occasion of its 50th anniversary for its enduring contributions to the protection, restoration, and stewardship of the James River; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the James River Association as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its leadership, dedication, and service to the Commonwealth.

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