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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 247

Offered March 5, 2026

Commending the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District.

Patron—Laufer

WHEREAS, in 2026, the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District celebrates 87 years of assisting Albemarle, Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson Counties and the City of Charlottesville through its mission to “advocate for natural resource conservation by implementing national, state, and local conservation programs, cooperating with like-minded organizations, and providing technical expertise to address resource conservation priorities”; and

WHEREAS, created in April 1939, the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District (TJSWCD) is an independent unit of state government that develops and implements programs and plans to conserve natural resources, control and prevent soil erosion, mitigate flooding, and determine how best to conserve water; and

WHEREAS, today, the four counties and one city that compose the TJSWCD encompass 2,010 square miles with a population of more than 240,000, making it the largest soil and water conservation district in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the TJSWCD has two major watersheds, the James River watershed, which includes the Rivanna, Hardware, Rockfish, and Tye Rivers, and the York River watershed, which includes the North Anna, South Anna, and Little Rivers, whose resources are used and enjoyed by millions of Virginians; and

WHEREAS, led by a 12-member board of directors, the TJSWCD provides agricultural and environmental conservation technical and financial assistance, makes educational information available to the public, supports a water resources protection conservation easement program, offers additional technical support to local governments, and operates and maintains several flood control dams that protect state and federal infrastructure and the personal property of residents of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the TJSWCD, along with the Commonwealth's other soil and water conservation districts, focuses on the control and prevention of nonpoint source water pollution through various programs, including the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program and the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, as well as by providing assistance with septic system maintenance and repair through Virginia Department of Environmental Quality 319 grants; and

WHEREAS, the TJSWCD regularly partners with more than thirty additional organizations and agencies to promote water quality, soil health, and resource resiliency through a number of initiatives, including changing environmental conditions and climate smart agriculture programs and stream and river buffer plantings; and

WHEREAS, since 1998, the TJSWCD has helped to protect more than 458 miles of stream banks with the implementation of livestock exclusion projects and has facilitated riparian buffer projects covering more than 5,000 acres; and

WHEREAS, since 2013, the TJSWCD has implemented 318 residential stormwater runoff best management practices, reducing runoff on more than two million square feet of impermeable surfaces, and has provided watershed and environmental education to more than 23,000 grade school students and 5,000 adults; and

WHEREAS, the TJSWCD owns Secluded Farm, a 150-acre property near Monticello that was given to the organization to be preserved as an open space and wildlife refuge, where an unusual, 33-foot-tall Blackhaw viburnum grows; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District on the occasion of its 87th anniversary for providing comprehensive and efficient natural resource assistance to Albemarle, Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson Counties and the City of Charlottesville; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for its dedication and tireless work to maintain and preserve the Commonwealth's natural resources for the benefit of its citizens.