**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEMORATE THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HUNTING ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE, A SOUTH CAROLINA MARITIME TREASURE.

Whereas, lighthouses by their very intent and purpose have stories rich with drama and historic significance. However, few, if any, possess a more colorful history than that of the lighthouse at Hunting Island State Park outside Beaufort; and

Whereas, the first of ten planned by the United States Congress for the South Carolina coast, the original ninety‑five‑foot structure was completed in July 1859. Situated on the north point of the wild and isolated maritime forested island, it replaced a lightship that marked the dangerous shoals, sandbars, and reefs of St. Helena Sound, halfway between Charleston and Savannah; and

Whereas, all went well for two years until the start of the Civil War, when Confederate troops blew up the lighthouse to hinder the approach of the Union fleet before the Battle of Port Royal. The rubble from the original lighthouse now rests at the bottom of the ocean almost two miles from the northern point of today’s shoreline; and

Whereas, a quarter mile inland from the original site, a new lighthouse was completed in 1875. Some said it was too far from the shore, but the ocean had already claimed the site of the old lighthouse, and the continuing erosion of the beach soon laid such criticisms to rest. In 1889, further encroachment of the sea, an encroachment that persists to this day, forced another relocation of the lighthouse to its present‑day site, one mile south and one and one quarter miles inland from its previous situation; and

Whereas, the possibility of relocation had been considered in the design of the new lighthouse, which used a shell composed of curved cast‑iron panels weighing about one thousand two hundred pounds each, all of them interchangeable in any location on the tower. On occasion, the lighthouse keeper found himself host to unexpected company in the form of shipwreck victims taking shelter with the island’s inhabitants inside the strong new lighthouse; and

Whereas, Hunting Island lighthouse served mariners until 1933, when it was decommissioned and replaced with a lighted whistle buoy. The State acquired the island from Beaufort County in 1938 and converted it to a state park, after which the keeper’s house served as home to Civilian Conservation Corps workers who were building a bridge between Hunting Island and St. Helena Island and constructing buildings for the park facility. In 1977, the Hunting Island lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

Whereas, according to one of the area’s most noted historians, the Hunting Island lighthouse is the greatest surviving artifact of Beaufort County’s “maritime golden age,” between 1866 and 1912, and, accordingly, several archaeological digs have taken place over the years; and

Whereas, the lighthouse now serves as a private aid to navigation and is the only historic lighthouse in the Palmetto State open to the public. Park visitors can climb its one hundred seventy‑five stairs for a breathtaking view of the ocean and beach, the vast salt marsh, and the five‑thousand‑acre park’s rare maritime forest; and

Whereas, this year marks the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Hunting Island lighthouse, and Hunting Island State Park will host a fun‑filled celebration of the lighthouse’s heritage on October 17 and 18, 2009. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, commemorate the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Hunting Island lighthouse, a South Carolina maritime treasure.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Hunting Island State Park.

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