**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE SOUTHERN CAROLINA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE AND ITS AFFILIATED LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR ITS UNIFYING VISION TO COORDINATE AND WIN A FEDERAL PROMISE ZONE DESIGNATION THAT WILL CREATE JOBS, INCREASE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND REDUCE VIOLENT CRIME.

Whereas, the United States government announced a new Promise Zone designation program in January 2013 to help twenty high‑poverty communities across the nation gain new tools and resources to tap into grant monies and other resources to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime; and

Whereas, the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance, in coordination with a leadership team composed of officials with the Center for a Better South, Chernoff Newman, the South Carolina Association of Community Economic Development, and the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie, identified a region of ninety thousand four people who live in Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties as facing numerous and significant community challenges stemming from high rates of poverty and unemployment, as well as comparatively few opportunities compared to the rest of the State; and

Whereas, the leadership team developed a strategic vision for the six‑county area and worked to secure partnerships and supporters from more than thirty public, private, and nonprofit groups, including, but not limited to, the county governments of each of the region’s counties. These supporting groups are Allendale County Alive, Center for a Better South, Coastal Conservation League, Denmark Technical College, Electrical Cooperatives of S.C., Envision S.C., GrowFoods Carolina, several local law enforcement agencies, Lowcountry Council of Governments, Lower Savannah Council of Governments, Palmetto Agribusiness Council, Palmetto Project, SCANA, several private banks, S.C. Association of Community Economic Development, S.C. Council on Competitiveness, S.C. Department of Agriculture, S.C. Department of Commerce, S.C. Housing Authority, S.C. Power Team, S.C. Sustainability Institute, S.C. Technical College System, S.C. Victim Assistance Network, State of S.C. second and fourteenth Judicial District Circuits, Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance, Technical College of the Lowcountry, Transform S.C., USC Office of Economic Engagement, USC Salkehatchie, and USC Salkehatchie Leadership Institute; and

Whereas, the leadership team, in association with partners and supporters, diligently crafted a compelling application for a federal Promise Zone designation and submitted it in November 2014; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development notified the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance in April 2015 that it won the only rural federal Promise Zone designation in the second round of winners; and

Whereas, the designation, which will last for ten years, will allow the counties in the zones to secure special help in crafting applications for existing federal grants and other resources, as well as preferences for certain competitive federal grant programs and technical assistance from participating federal agencies. Now therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance and its affiliated leadership team for its unifying vision to coordinate and win a federal Promise Zone designation that will create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance.

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