**A** **JOINT RESOLUTION**

TO COMMEMORATE THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE RICHARD V. WOODS MEMORIAL BRIDGE IN DOWNTOWN BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND TO CREATE THE WOODS BRIDGE STUDY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE THE BRIDGE’S LIFESPAN AND CONDITION AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON POTENTIAL PLANS OR REPLACEMENT OPTIONS IN ORDER TO BEST PRESERVE THE HISTORIC LANDMARK.

Whereas, on December 17, 1959, the Richard V. Woods Memorial Bridge, popularly known as the Woods Memorial Bridge, celebrated its opening ceremony. For sixty years, this swing bridge in downtown Beaufort has been a Lowcountry gem, remaining today as one of the few swing bridges in our State; and

Whereas, in addition to being among the small number of moving bridges, the Woods Memorial Bridge also is one of an even smaller group of surviving truss bridges. To this day, the structure retains good historic integrity and continues to reliably open to allow boats through; and

Whereas, the Woods Memorial Bridge connects downtown Beaufort with its outlying sea islands. The structure received its name in honor of a South Carolina Highway Patrol Officer who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty in 1969; and

Whereas, as one of the last remaining swing bridges, Woods Memorial Bridge, instead of opening in the center and lifting up like most moving bridges, has a center section which swings away from the rest of the bridge to allow boats too tall to otherwise pass to safely cross to the opposite side, opening hourly for maritime traffic on the Intracoastal Waterway; and

Whereas, one of the most photographed of Beaufort’s landmarks, Woods Memorial Bridge also starred in *Forrest Gump*, acting as a bridge over the Mississippi; and

Whereas, the bridge is decorated with a detail of a palmetto tree along the rail in honor of the South Carolina State flag as an artful reminder that Beaufort is the State’s second oldest city; and

Whereas, whether viewing the bridge from the islands or the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, it is a visual treat, complementing the beauty of downtown Beaufort. From its steel beams shining in the distance to its charming details, this swing bridge has earned its place as a beloved South Carolina landmark. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. (A) There is created the Woods Memorial Bridge study committee to examine the bridge’s lifespan, condition, plans for any known repairs, and make recommendations on potential plans, needs of community, traffic, and possible costs associated with upgrade, repair, or replacement options in the future.

(B) The study committee must be composed of:

(1) a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(2) a member of the South Carolina Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;

(3) the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, or their designee;

(4) a bridge specialist of the department appointed by the secretary;

(5) a Beaufort County representative of the department appointed by the secretary;

(6) a United States Army Corps of Engineers bridge and permitting specialist;

(7) the City of Beaufort mayor, or their designee;

(8) the Beaufort County Council chair, or their designee;

(9) the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce president, or their designee;

(10) the Beaufort Black Chamber President, or their designee;

(11) the Lowcountry Council of Governments chair, or their designee;

(12) one Northern Beaufort County resident appointed by the Beaufort County legislative delegation;

(13) one City of Beaufort business owner appointed by the Beaufort County legislative delegation;

(14) the Chairman of Main Street Beaufort or their designee;

(15) the Historic Beaufort Foundation Chairman, or their designee;

(16) the Director of the South Carolina Lowcountry Tourism Commission, or their designee;

(17) the Lady’s Island Business and Professional Association President, or their designee; and

(18) the Chairman of the Sea Islands Corridor Coalition, or their designee.

(C) The members of the study committee shall appoint a chairman from its members.

(D) The City of Beaufort and Beaufort County Council shall provide staffing for the study committee.

(E) Members of the study committee shall serve without compensation and may not receive mileage, per diem, or subsistence.

SECTION 2. This joint resolution takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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