**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CONGRATULATE MARK L. ROBERTSON UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT, TO COMMEND HIM FOR HIS THIRTY‑FOUR YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE WITH THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, AND TO WISH HIM MUCH HAPPINESS AND FULFILLMENT IN THE YEARS TO COME.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate are pleased to recognize Mark L. Robertson upon the occasion of his retirement as executive director of the South Carolina chapter of The Nature Conservancy on January 10, 2020; and

Whereas, Mark is an alumnus of the College of William and Mary, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in biology, and the University of Virginia, where he earned a master’s degree in environmental sciences; and

Whereas, Mark began his career with The Nature Conservancy in 1985 as an aquatic ecologist at the Virginia Coast Reserve, where he worked on ecosystem‑scale conservation planning, before moving to Florida to launch one of The Nature Conservancy’s first marine conservation programs in the Florida Keys. While in the Keys, Mark played an integral role in working to pass congressional legislation creating the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, which is primarily responsible for protecting the only tropical coral reef ecosystem in North America; and

Whereas, in his leadership role at The Nature Conservancy in South Carolina, Mark has led a multi‑disciplinary, statewide staff in protecting land and freshwater, promoting and implementing controlled burning, managing forests and restoring marine resources, and collaborating with partners and elected officials to create new financial incentives and funding sources for conservation in state government; and

Whereas, under his leadership, the South Carolina chapter of The Nature Conservancy had a hand in a number of notable conservation victories, including the largest conservation land purchase in state history; tax incentives for donations of land or conservation easements; and the establishment of the South Carolina Conservation Bank, which has helped conserve 287,000 acres statewide; and

Whereas, Mark will bring his chapter leadership to a close on a high note, having successfully led the largest conservation campaign in South Carolina history by raising over sixty million dollars for solutions to some of the State’s most important conservation challenges; and

Whereas, an active and engaged member of his community, Mark was elected to the council of the Town of Arcadia Lakes, is a member of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, and has served on numerous boards to advance conservation in South Carolina, including Governor McMaster’s Statewide Floodwater Commission, the Rural Resources Coalition, and the board of Palmetto Green; and

Whereas, the Senate is grateful for the passion, commitment, and dedication that Mark L. Robertson has shown in serving the State and the people of South Carolina and is pleased to salute him upon the occasion of his retirement. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, congratulate Mark L. Robertson upon the occasion of his retirement, commend him for his thirty‑four years of distinguished public service at The Nature Conservancy, and wish him much happiness and fulfillment in the years to come.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mark L. Robertson.

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