

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

Commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the European honey bee to North America.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 13, 2022
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 17, 2022

WHEREAS, 2022 marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first European honey bees to North America, a momentous event that has had far-reaching effects on agricultural and daily life in the Commonwealth and the United States; and

WHEREAS, while prehistoric evidence of honey bees has been discovered in North America, the western or European honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, was not known on the continent prior to the arrival of explorers and colonists from Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries; and

WHEREAS, honey bees were first introduced to North America by the Virginia Company of London; several beehives departed from England in 1621 and arrived at the settlement in Jamestown in March 1622; and

WHEREAS, honey bees subsequently became an essential part of farm communities and hives were found outside the homes of many early colonists; honey bees also spread to nearby woods and began to thrive in the region; and

WHEREAS, early colonists used honey from beehives as a sweetener and flavoring for food and for the fermentation of mead; colonists also used beeswax to make candles and cosmetics and as a sealant, both for use domestically and for export; and

WHEREAS, honey bees from the Commonwealth were transported to other English colonies and eventually spread throughout North America; and

WHEREAS, honey bees are now used to pollinate more than 80 crops and orchard trees in the Commonwealth, increasing their value by more than \$135 million annually; and

WHEREAS, honey bee pollination improves the health and diversity of flora and fauna in forests, meadows, and wetlands throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, apiaries play a vital role in Virginia's economy, and residents, businesses, schools, and organizations throughout the Commonwealth participate in beekeeping activities for personal enjoyment, agricultural production, scientific research, and environmental sustainability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the European honey bee to North America; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia State Beekeepers Association as an expression of the General Assembly's appreciation for the role the European honey bee has played in the development of agriculture in Virginia.