

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1657

By Watson

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Tennessee Aquarium on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of the members of this General Assembly to recognize those Tennessee attractions that edify and delight patrons from the Volunteer State and beyond; and

WHEREAS, one such entity is the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, a premier and beloved destination of children and adults alike, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Aquarium opened on May 1, 1992, to much fanfare and an opening dedication attended by Governor Ned McWherter and Chattanooga Mayor Gene Roberts, who portentously remarked, "For decades to come, the people of this place will look back to this day and mark it as a magical moment. This is just the beginning of Chattanooga's renaissance, but oh, what a mighty beginning it is"; and

WHEREAS, Chattanooga's initial, entirely privately funded \$45-million gamble has paid off exponentially, as it created an institution that remains one of the city's most iconic symbols and strongest economic drivers; and

WHEREAS, receiving more than twenty-six million visitors since its opening, the Tennessee Aquarium has driven \$4.88 billion in spending to Hamilton County, with out-of-town visitors having paid more than \$300 million in state and local taxes, which support essential services such as schools, police, and fire departments; and

WHEREAS, even with pandemic-induced daily attendance caps, the Aquarium saw more than 668,000 visitors in 2021 and generated \$135.7 million for the local economy; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming success of the Tennessee Aquarium is attributable to its partnership with Chattanooga; the Aquarium would not exist without the community's vision, civic pride, and visitation; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Aquarium is a true treasure of this State and a testament to what successes may be realized when cities are willing to dream big and invest in that vision; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that we recognize President and CEO Keith Sanford, the dedicated staff, and the community supporters of the Aquarium on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize the Tennessee Aquarium on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary, extending our gratitude for its many contributions to Chattanooga and this State and our best wishes for much continued success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.