

By Representative Fischer

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House Resolution

A resolution joining the citizens of the city of St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay region in anticipation of the first game of the area's own major league baseball team, the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

WHEREAS, in July 1977, the Florida Legislature created the Pinellas Sports Authority, thus beginning the city of St. Petersburg's quest for major league baseball, and

WHEREAS, on November 22, 1986, the city of St. Petersburg sponsored festivities which drew a record-breaking crowd of more than 9,000 stadium supporters to the official groundbreaking ceremony of what was to become the Florida Suncoast Dome, today's Tropicana Field, located in St. Petersburg, and

WHEREAS, time and again the region saw major league prospects slip from its grasp, with the near misses ultimately fueling an even stronger cooperative effort by community, civic, and business leaders to make come true the dream of being home to a major league baseball team, and

WHEREAS, the batters hit home when, on March 9, 1995, victorious managing partner Vincent J. Naimoli celebrated with the millions of citizens from around the area, the awarding of a major league expansion franchise, and

WHEREAS, millions of dollars and thousands of labor hours later, the newly renovated Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg is ready to host thousands of spectators who will experience the reality of major league baseball after two decades of anticipation and hard work, and

1 WHEREAS, on March 31, 1998, at 5 p.m., the Tampa Bay
2 Devil Rays take the field and, when the first pitch crosses
3 the plate, fans and players will be participating in one of
4 the most significant historic events in the city of St.
5 Petersburg, Florida, and

6 WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the House of
7 Representatives recognize a 20-year effort that has resulted
8 in the acquisition of the area's own major league baseball
9 team, NOW, THEREFORE,

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11 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
12 Florida:

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14 That the House of Representatives pause in its
15 deliberations to congratulate the citizens of St. Petersburg
16 and the Tampa Bay area for their persistence in attracting a
17 major league baseball team and to wish them well and much
18 success when the Tampa Bay Devil Rays play their first game
19 March 31, 1998.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution
21 be presented to Vincent J. Naimoli and the other owners of the
22 Tampa Bay Devil Rays, as a tangible token of the sentiments
23 expressed herein.

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