

By Senators Sullivan, Bronson, Forman, Latvala, Hargrett,
Carlton, Diaz-Balart and Laurent

22-717A-00

1 Senate Resolution No. ____
2 A resolution honoring Florida's state parks,
3 voted "America's Best"; commending the Division
4 of Recreation and Parks of the Department of
5 Environmental Protection for receiving the 1999
6 National State Park Gold Medal, signifying that
7 Florida's state park system is the best in all
8 50 states; recognizing July, 2000, as "Parks
9 and Recreation Month" in celebration of the
10 benefits of all state, national, and local
11 parks in Florida.
12
13 WHEREAS, Florida's massive and diverse state park
14 system, with over 500,000 acres and 151 park properties, has
15 received national recognition for its state-parks
16 partnerships, its cutting-edge resource management, its
17 recreation programs, and its innovative ecotourism marketing
18 initiatives, and
19 WHEREAS, more than 1,900 public and private partners
20 have been recruited to help provide expanded resource-based
21 recreational opportunities for the 15 million annual visitors
22 to Florida's state parks, and
23 WHEREAS, some 60 citizen support organizations assist
24 Florida's state parks, and in 1998 volunteers provided 760,000
25 hours of service, the equivalent of 365 full-time employees,
26 and
27 WHEREAS, Florida's award-winning "PARKnership" program
28 has paired 45 schools with 34 Florida state parks for
29 environmental education opportunities, and its "Partnership in
30 Parks," a public-private matching program, has resulted in \$1
31 million in park improvements, and

1 WHEREAS, since 1996, attendance at Florida state parks
2 has increased by two million visitors, a 17-percent increase,
3 and self-generated revenues, which are used to help operate
4 Florida's state parks, have increased by 30 percent over the
5 same period, and

6 WHEREAS, in addition to preserving one-half million
7 acres in Florida's finest, most pristine natural areas for
8 enjoyment by this and future generations, Florida's state park
9 system has a direct and positive economic impact of \$273
10 million and has created 8,100 jobs for Florida's communities,
11 and

12 WHEREAS, at the National Recreation and Park
13 Association Annual Congress last November in Nashville,
14 Tennessee, the National Sporting Goods Association's National
15 Sports Foundation, Inc., awarded the prestigious 1999 State
16 Parks Gold Medal to Florida's state park system, recognizing
17 it as the best state park system in America, and

18 WHEREAS, the National Recreation and Park Association
19 has designated July, 2000, as National Parks and Recreation
20 Month in the United States in order to emphasize and celebrate
21 the importance of state, national, and local parks and the
22 immense benefits of parks and recreation in our society, NOW,
23 THEREFORE,

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25 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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27 That the Florida Senate commends the employees of the
28 Department of Environmental Protection's Division of
29 Recreation and Parks for their dedication and commitment that
30 helped Florida receive this national honor; encourages all
31 Floridians to support Florida's state parks, voted "America's

1 Best"; and, along with the National Recreation and Park
2 Association, recognizes July, 2000, as National Parks and
3 Recreation Month.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution,
5 with the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to David B.
6 Struhs, Secretary of Environmental Protection; Bob Ballard,
7 Deputy Secretary of Environmental Protection; and Fran P.
8 Mainella, Director of the Division of Recreation and Parks, as
9 a tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.

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