

By Senator Cruz

18-02483A-20

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing the 25th anniversary of The
3 Florida Aquarium on February 25, 2020.

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5 WHEREAS, The Florida Aquarium celebrates its 25th
6 anniversary this year, and

7 WHEREAS, since first opening to the public on March 31,
8 1995, in Tampa, The Florida Aquarium has welcomed more than 16.5
9 million visitors, and its educational programs have served 1.5
10 million students, many of whom might otherwise never have had
11 access to an aquarium facility, and

12 WHEREAS, The Florida Aquarium opened as a 152,000-square-
13 foot aquarium to tell the story of water, from its underground
14 source to the open sea, and now is a 250,000-square-foot
15 facility with more than 530 species and 8,000 animals, including
16 mammals, reptiles, birds, invertebrates, amphibians, and fish,
17 and 5,000 specimens of plants and trees, including more than 100
18 Florida-native species, and

19 WHEREAS, because of its role in protecting animals, The
20 Florida Aquarium has received accreditation by the Association
21 of Zoos and Aquariums for 23 of its 25 years of existence, and

22 WHEREAS, to increase the genetic diversity of coral and
23 ultimately create more resilient coral reefs, The Florida
24 Aquarium has reproduced staghorn coral and raised more than
25 5,000 staghorn larvae to maturity in nurseries in Apollo Beach,
26 and

27 WHEREAS, The Florida Aquarium's commitment to coral
28 conservation has resulted in the outplanting of those nursery-
29 grown staghorn coral in the Florida Reef Tract, to protect and

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30 restore this national treasure, and

31 WHEREAS, The Florida Aquarium made history last year as the
32 first in the world to successfully spawn the functionally
33 extinct pillar coral in a laboratory, and

34 WHEREAS, in 2019, The Florida Aquarium and several partners
35 opened the Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Center, which includes one
36 of Florida's deepest turtle-exclusive dive pools, to
37 rehabilitate sea turtles and further the aquarium's commitment
38 to preserve and protect marine environments, and

39 WHEREAS, in addition to its mission to protect aquatic
40 animals and the ecosystem in this state, The Florida Aquarium
41 also offers world-class entertainment, including guest dive
42 experiences and wild dolphin excursions, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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46 That the Florida Senate salutes The Florida Aquarium for
47 its commitment to preserving and protecting Florida's natural
48 habitats and ecological systems and to educating the public
49 about this state's marine environments, and recognizes the 25th
50 anniversary of The Florida Aquarium on February 25, 2020.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be
52 presented to Kimberly Bruce, chair of The Florida Aquarium Board
53 of Directors, as a tangible token of the sentiments expressed
54 herein.