**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**S. 1284**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Senate Resolution

Sponsors: Senators Setzler and Shealy

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Introduced in the Senate on April 24, 2024

Adopted by the Senate on April 24, 2024

Summary: Riverbanks Zoo and Garden Day

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 4/24/2024 Senate Introduced and adopted (Senate Journal‑page 3)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=1284&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/24/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/1284_20240424.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

to commend Riverbanks zoo and garden for their outstanding work over the past fifty years and TO RECOGNIZE May 1, 2024, AS “riverbanks zoo and garden day” IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, on April 25, 1974, Riverbanks Zoo opened to the public and welcomed its first visitors to moated exhibits featuring cats, bears, giraffes, and white rhinos, individual exhibits of small mammals, and the Ecosystem Birdhouse, which held hundreds of birds in indoor and outdoor exhibits; and

Whereas, in its first major expansion completed in 1989, Riverbanks updated food service and other guest amenities and added two new exhibits: the Riverbanks Farm, featuring domestic animals in a farm setting, and the Aquarium‑Reptile Complex, displaying diverse habitats ranging from the desert to the tropics to the ocean. These new exhibits contributed to a count of over one million visitors in 1990; and

Whereas, located across the Lower Saluda River, Riverbanks Botanical Garden opened in 1995 and features over four thousand species of native and exotic plants in gardens, reflecting their growth requirements and natural beauty as well as gardening workshops, classes, and guided tours for all levels of gardeners; and

Whereas, the three‑phase expansion and development project known as “Destination Riverbanks” broke ground in May 2014. This project added two animal habitats, Grizzly Ridge and Otter Run, as well as a Guest Relations Center. It created Waterfall Junction in the Garden for children to play in and explore and culminated in the opening of Sea Lion Landing, a replica of Pier 39 in San Francisco inhabited by sea lions and harbor seals; and

Whereas, between June 2020 and April 2024, the privately funded Phase One of the Zoo’s “Bridge to the Wild” expansion added an immersive habitat for southern white rhinos as well as the completely reimagined Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center to shine a light on the important conservation work Riverbanks is doing behind the scenes to protect threatened coral and gecko populations; and

Whereas, Phase One also includes construction of the new Lloyd S. and Doris N. Liles Komodo Dragon facility, which is nearing completion, and the architectural planning for the Jane B. Friedman Conservation Learning Center, which has begun; and

Whereas, in December 2023, Richland and Lexington County Councils approved a general obligation bond that will support Phase Two of the Zoo’s “Bridge to the Wild” expansion. This phase will feature a primate forest, a multi‑purpose restaurant facility, and a South Carolina nature preserve along the banks of the Saluda River, as well as upgraded big cat habitats. These changes are anticipated to propel Riverbank attendance to one point six million annually and drive one hundred seventy‑five million annually in economic impact to our State; and

Whereas, in addition to adhering to the highest standards in the care and conservation of animals and plants, Riverbanks serves to protect and preserve the historical significance of the Saluda River Factory District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

Whereas, with creative vision, strategic planning, and strong support, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden has become a highly‑acclaimed, award‑winning center for conservation, education, entertainment, and history. The members of the Senate are thrilled to join in celebrating Riverbanks Zoo and Garden and their fifty years as a community treasure in our State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, commend Riverbanks Zoo and Garden for their outstanding work over the past fifty years and recognize May 1, 2024, as “Riverbanks Zoo and Garden Day” in South Carolina.

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