**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND CONGRATULATE CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AT THE CELEBRATION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE TO CHESTER, LANCASTER, UNION, AND YORK COUNTIES.

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives is pleased to learn that Catawba Regional Council of Governments (COG) is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary on October 21, 2021. The four counties of Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York were the formative member governments of Catawba Regional COG, officially created in 1970. These counties, along with the twenty‑two municipalities in the region, have worked with, and utilized the services of, Catawba Regional COG to improve their communities and the lives of citizens residing therein; and

Whereas, over its half‑century of service, it has successfully administered eight loan funds, lending more than $85 million to businesses and local governments across twenty‑six South Carolina counties, leveraging $165 million in private investment, and creating more than 3,100 jobs across the region and State; and

Whereas, in addition, it has administered a statewide Brownfield Cleanup Loan Fund and over the past fifteen years has originated more than $11 million in loans and subgrants to finance the remediation of brownfield sites in the Palmetto State. The COG has administered more than $1 million in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assessment grants, resulting in the environmental testing of dozens of contaminated parcels across the region, thereby setting the stage for environmental cleanup and future redevelopment; and

Whereas, the COG also has successfully written and administered more than $245 million in federal, state, and local grants for local governments, special purpose districts, educational institutions, and communities in the Catawba region. These funds have improved water and sewer systems, electrical systems, parks, fire suppression capacity, downtown streetscapes, and other commercial corridors, and they have preserved historic structures; and

Whereas, since 1998, Catawba Regional has functioned as the administrator for the region’s Workforce Development Board and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, with more than $92 million of federal WIOA funds managed and deployed for workforce training, technical assistance, job placement, and operations of three state works centers; and

Whereas, in partnership with the twenty‑six local governments across the region, the COG has enhanced local planning efforts by providing technical services and efficiencies and coordinating work with adjacent jurisdictions. The COG also acts as a neutral convenor of elected officials and the private sector. Through the COG’s efforts, the four counties have benefited from $397 million in federal and state capital brought to the region, resulting in a cumulative return on local taxpayer investment of $50.00 to $1.00; and

Whereas, the council has grown from a single staff member with shared office space to more than twenty‑two professionals on staff, who currently manage more than $60 million of lending, grants, and real estate assets; and

Whereas, finally, the COG strives for excellence. In the past twenty years, it has been a nine‑time winner of the National Association of Development Organizations’ Innovation/Impact Award. The council has received the South Carolina Association of Regional Councils’ COG Project of the Year award nine times, as well; and

Whereas, with great pleasure, the House salutes Catawba Regional and extends best wishes for many more years of fine service to its member counties and beyond. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, honor and congratulate Catawba Regional Council of Governments at the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary of service to Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York counties.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Catawba Regional Council of Governments.

‑‑‑‑XX‑‑‑‑