



HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 61

(By Delegates Hartman, Campbell, Sponaugle,
R. Phillips, Iaquinta, Perry, Craig, Guthrie,
Lynch, M. Poling, Poore, Skaff, P. Smith,
Staggers, Stephens, Tomblin, Walker, Wells and Young)

Recognizing the West Virginia Center for Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) in Green Bank, Pocahontas County, and requesting the Congressional Delegation from the State of West Virginia's assistance in restoring federal funding for the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank, Pocahontas County.

Whereas, WV STEM education is essential to educating our youth in the Mountain State; and

Whereas, The National Radio Astronomy Observatory was founded in 1956 to provide state-of-the-art radio telescope facilities for use by the international scientific community to research the universe; and

Whereas, West Virginia's great late-Senator Robert C. Byrd secured funding for a radio telescope at Green Bank, and upon the telescope's opening in 2000 the facility was named in his honor; and

Whereas, The 100-m Green Bank Telescope has the largest collecting area of any fully-steerable telescope in the world; and

Whereas, Scientists from around the world use the Green Bank Telescope to observe the skies for 6,000 hours every year; and

Whereas, The Green Bank Telescope has been used to discover other stars and galaxies, and even complex molecules, such as sugar, in space; and

Whereas, The Green Bank Telescope stokes the interest in the skies of over 40,000 visitors per year; and

Whereas, The National Radio Astronomy Observatory has more than fifty years of experience in nationally-recognized STEM education programs and activities, currently hosts over three thousand students in educational programs annually and hosts numerous major world class scientific instruments in use on the site; and

Whereas, The National Radio Astronomy Observatory is poised to expand its STEM education and work force development capabilities within West Virginia; and

Whereas, The State of West Virginia has a vested interest in expanding its STEM educational opportunities to all residents; and

Whereas, The annual economic impact on Pocahontas County is around \$29 million and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory is one of the top employers within Pocahontas County; and

Whereas, The National Science Foundation Astronomy Portfolio Review Committee recommended in 2012 that the Robert C. Byrd Green Bank Telescope be defunded over a five year period; and

Whereas, A lack of federal funding will result in a multi- million dollar hole in annual operating costs; therefore, be it

Resolved by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the National Radio Astronomy Observatory's West Virginia Center for STEM education located in Green Bank, Pocahontas County, is recognized as a preeminent facility for scientific, engineering, machining and STEM education; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the West Virginia Center for STEM Education as an exemplary school for STEM education in the Mountain State; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the state encourages a cooperative effort between the National Radio Astronomy Observatory's Green Bank facility and WorkForce West Virginia, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Economic Development and other public and private statewide organizations to grow the National Radio Astronomy Observatory's STEM education programs within the needs of the state while also working to secure the economic future of the Green Bank facility; and, be it

Further Resolved, That West Virginia Congressional Delegation be requested to work to restore federal funding for the Green Bank Telescope; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Congress ensure that the Green Bank Telescope is providing the scientific community with valuable information for years to come by keeping funding for the Green Bank telescope intact; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates forward a copy of this resolution to the Members of the West Virginia Congressional Delegation.