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LEGISLATURE APPROVES BILL DECLARING DAUPHIN ISLAND SEA LAB AS THE “OFFICIAL AQUARIUM OF ALABAMA”

The Alabama Legislature on Tuesday night awarded final approval to House Bill 136, which is sponsored by State Rep. Chip Brown (R - Mobile) and designates the Dauphin Island Sea Lab’s Alabama Aquarium and Marine Research Center as the “Official Aquarium of Alabama.”

“The Dauphin Island Sea Lab and its aquarium are among the state’s greatest tourism treasures and have certainly earned recognition as the ‘Official Aquarium of Alabama’,” Brown said. “It is my hope that the title will be used to market the Sea Lab, attract more tourists and visitors, and generate additional dollars for the facility’s important research work, conservative programs, and educational efforts.”

“The official designation also opens the door for the Sea Lab to receive new research grants and other funding from a variety of available sources,” he added.

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab was founded by the Alabama Legislature in 1971 in order to provide marine science programs for many of the state’s colleges and universities. Today, 23 member institutions partner with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab to provide studies to undergraduate and graduate students.

Its mission has since expanded to include K-12 education, professional development, and a public aquarium, which opened in 1998 and has attracted more than one million visitors.

The facility includes 31 aquariums containing more than 30,000 gallons of water and displaying roughly 100 species that highlight the four key habitats of coastal Alabama: the Mobile Tensaw River Delta, Mobile Bay, the Barrier Islands, and the Northern Gulf of Mexico.

Trip Advisor, a website that attracts 390 million monthly visitors seeking information about tourist sites and destinations, has awarded the Dauphin Island Sea Lab its prestigious “Travelers’ Choice Award” for receiving consistently high ratings and reviews.

Brown’s legislation has been transmitted to Gov. Kay Ivey’s desk for review and signature.