

# NEWS RELEASE

717 General Booth Blvd. Virginia Beach, VA 23451



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Matt Klepeisz | O: 757 385-0252 C: 757-613-0876 [MKlepeisz@VirginiaAquarium.com](mailto:MKlepeisz@VirginiaAquarium.com)

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## Virginia Aquarium Recognized as Green Travel Leader in Virginia

(Virginia Beach, VA) The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center was honored as a leader through the Virginia Green Travel program at the 4th annual Virginia Green Travel Conference and Travel Star Awards Celebration. These awards were provided to businesses in the tourism industry which have demonstrated exceptional effort to protect the environment and promote green tourism in Virginia. The Virginia Aquarium was recognized for the bi-annual E-Cycling Program.

Virginia Green hosted the 4th annual Virginia Green Travel Conference and Travel Star Awards Celebration on February 16 and 17, at the Darden School of Business Conference Center at the University of Virginia. The conference featured educational workshops, a green tourism business expo, and great speakers, including a keynote by Maxime Verstraete, VP of Corporate Responsibility for Hilton Worldwide. The conference culminated on February 17th with the Virginia Green Travel Star Awards Luncheon, hosted by the First Lady of Virginia Dorothy McAuliffe. Carolyn Robertson, a trustee with the Virginia Aquarium Foundation, was present to accept our award.

Since its inception in 2009, the Aquarium's E-Cycling Program has helped divert more than 300 tons (600,000 pounds) of electronics away from landfills and back into the economy. E-Cycling Partners Goodwill Virginia, TFC Recycling, and the City of Virginia Beach Public Works division contribute to the success of the E-Cycling Program. The event is held twice a year, usually in January and again in September.

"The Virginia Aquarium is steadfast in our commitment to the environment and sustainable practices," said Lynn Clements, Executive Director. "We are honored to be recognized for our efforts, and are pleased that our E-Cycling Program is a model for Virginia."

*The Virginia Aquarium Foundation is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring conservation of the marine environment through education, research and sustainable practices. The Foundation was formed in 1981, three years before construction on the Aquarium even began. Over the years, the Foundation's role in support of the Aquarium has not only included garnering financial support to pay for the Aquarium's exhibits, but it has expanded to include funding of education programs, and research and conservation efforts such as the Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response and Sensible Seafood™ programs.*

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