

No. R-146. House concurrent resolution in memory of Sherry Walter Belknap of Bloomfield.

(H.C.R.51)

Offered by: Representatives Deen of Westminster, Johnson of Canaan and Peaslee of Guildhall

Offered by: Senators Illuzzi and Starr

Whereas, Sherry Belknap, who recently passed away after a long battle with cancer, was a bear of a man with a big heart and a penchant for puppies and other small vulnerable creatures, and

Whereas, he came from a long line of woods' workers, and for most of his career, he excelled at selling logging equipment as a national representative, and worked locally as a logging contractor, and

Whereas, Sherry Belknap was devoted to his community of Bloomfield, serving as a selectman for 18 years, raising over \$100,000.00 in grants to restore the old Bloomfield Town Hall, a jewel of the town, doing much of the rehabilitation and painting himself, and

Whereas, when the DeBanville Store in Bloomfield came on the market, Sherry Belknap and his wife, Darlene, purchased it and then built a new general store in keeping with the architectural design and Victorian colors of the town hall he had restored across the street, rather than let the store diminish into the generic "cookie cutter" type convenience store, and

Whereas, in the mid 1990s, when Champion International proposed spraying aerial herbicides over 32,000 acres of the Nulhegan Basin, Sherry Belknap did not let his own career in the forest industry keep him from

speaking up against the proposal, and he became a leader in the ultimately successful effort to achieve a state moratorium on aerial spraying, and

Whereas, when Champion International put its large Northeast Kingdom land holdings on the market, Sherry Belknap became an extraordinary local leader in the effort to conserve 133,000 acres in private and public ownership, and

Whereas, Governor Howard Dean appointed Sherry Belknap to chair the Champion Lands Advisory Council, mediating a highly charged debate that came at some personal cost, but he worked diligently to ensure that a vast majority of the acreage would continue to be forest-based and accessible for hunting and fishing and for the use of future generations, and

Whereas, aside from his role in preserving access to the former Champion Lands, Sherry Belknap worked to make other Vermont lands and waters available to the public by: helping the Vermont River Conservancy and other organizations create the 40-acre Lyman Falls State Park, a canoe campsite on the Connecticut River; assisting with the establishment of a second permanent canoe access to the Connecticut River in Bloomfield, a campsite and paddle boat access near the mouth of the Nulhegan River; and helping establish a campsite and three-quarters of a mile of frontage for permanent public access to the Nulhegan River along his family's property, and

Whereas, Sherry Belknap left a legacy as a successful advocate for the protection of, and public access to, Vermont's lands and waters including the

state's most extensive bear and moose habitat, largest deer wintering area, diverse wetlands, timberland, and waters for canoeing and fishing, and

Whereas, hunters and nature photographers have greater opportunities in Vermont to pursue their avocations due to Sherry Belknap's efforts, and

Whereas, the enormity of Sherry Belknap's achievements and contributions to land and water protection in Vermont, and to the quality of life in the Northeast Kingdom, should long be remembered, and

Whereas, he was the caring husband of Darlene and father of Karen, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly remembers with much appreciation and respect Sherry Walter Belknap of Bloomfield, a remarkable man, and conveys its sincere condolences to his family and be it further

Resolved: That the secretary of state be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Darlene Ann Belknap of Bloomfield and Karen Ann (Belknap) Labree of West Danville.