

2015-K1113

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the life and accomplishments of Henry L. Diamond, the first Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to publicly mourn the death of those prominent citizens whose lifework and purposeful endeavors have served to enrich and enhance the quality and character of life for others in their community and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is with feelings of deepest regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Henry Diamond, a preeminent citizen whose distinguished public service and caring commitment will long serve as a standard to which others might aspire; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Diamond died on Sunday, February 21, 2016, at the age of 83; and

WHEREAS, Henry Louis Diamond was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on May 24, 1932, to Louis Diamond and the former Esther Deich; he was proud of his immigrant parents, and appreciated the values they instilled in him as a child; and

WHEREAS, In 1950, Henry L. Diamond graduated from The McCallie School; four years later, he earned his bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, After graduation, Henry L. Diamond proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army in Germany; for his meritorious service, he was the recipient of the Freedoms Foundation Award; and

WHEREAS, After his discharge, Henry L. Diamond furthered his education by obtaining his law degree from Georgetown University Law Center; in 1961, he joyfully married the former Elizabeth "Betty" Tatum; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Diamond began his illustrious ecological career working with environmental activist Laurence Rockefeller serving on

President John F. Kennedy's Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission; the Commission's 1962 report, OUTDOOR RECREATION FOR AMERICA, led to the creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Wilderness Act, and a national system of wild and scenic rivers; and

WHEREAS, During the 1960s, several events occurred which raised the public awareness of the potential harm to the environment caused by man; by 1970, the environmental movement gathered steam prompting activists to declare April 22 as Earth Day and to promote it as a day of national consciousness-raising about environmental threats; and

WHEREAS, At this auspicious event, Governor Nelson Rockefeller appointed Henry L. Diamond as the first Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), a position he served with great distinction from 1970-1973; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Diamond will be fondly remembered as a pioneer and steadfast defender of the environment during a period when ecology and conservation efforts were considered eccentric; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure at the New York State DEC, Henry L. Diamond combined all New York State resource management and anti-pollution programs into the Nation's first environmental department; this remarkable conservationist was at the forefront of creating programs to deal with mercury pollution and solid waste management, initiatives which later became models for many other states; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure, New York was in the forefront of efforts to ban certain pesticides, eliminate polluting phosphates from detergents and protect vast swaths of the Adirondacks; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Henry L. Diamond enthusiastically advocated for the Environmental Quality Bond Act by leading a 533-mile bicycle ride across

New York State to raise awareness on this issue which provided for water and air pollution control and land acquisition; and

WHEREAS, One year later, Henry L. Diamond resigned his post to become Executive Director of the Commission on Critical Choices for Americans,

an authority created by the Governor to set goals for the Nation; and

WHEREAS, In 1975, Henry L. Diamond joined a burgeoning Washington, D. C. environmental law firm which became Beveridge & Diamond; under his leadership, the practice became one of the Nation's largest firms dedicated to environmental and natural resources law; and

WHEREAS, As an environmental attorney, Henry L. Diamond advised corporations and municipalities and served on more than 30 nonprofit boards and commissions including Resources for the Future, the Environmental Law Institute, The Woodstock Foundation, The Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., and Americans for Our Heritage and Recreation; and

WHEREAS, Working pro bono, Henry L. Diamond represented the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in its defense of the constitutionality of rail banking; and

WHEREAS, In 1991, Henry L. Diamond chaired the National Park Service 75th Anniversary Conference, and co-authored the 1996 Sustainable Use of Land Project report, LAND USE IN AMERICA; most recently, he co-chaired the bipartisan Outdoor Resources Review Group; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Diamond's bond with Laurance Rockefeller enabled him to facilitate some of Laurance's generous donations to the National Park Service; some of these gifts were the JY Ranch in Wyoming, additions to Hawaii's Haleakala National Park, areas in the United States Virgin Islands, and the establishment of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont; and

WHEREAS, For his incredible contributions to conservation and the field of environmental law, Henry L. Diamond was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades; in October of 2015, the Environmental Law Institute presented him with its prestigious Environmental Achievement Award before an audience of more than 700 environmental professionals from the private sector, government and non-profit communities; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Henry L. Diamond received the Secretary of the Interior's 2011 Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award, the Interior Department's highest honor for a private citizen; he was also bestowed

the 2008 Pugsley Medal by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Diamond is survived by his loving wife, Elizabeth; and his daughter, Laura (Bill) Decker; and

WHEREAS, For more than six decades, Henry L. Diamond devoted his life

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to public service and protecting New York State's natural resources with a focus on leading by example; his passion and dedication to his beliefs was instrumental in developing environmental law in the United States; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of Henry L. Diamond who worked tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of not only New Yorkers, but all citizens throughout the 50 states; and

WHEREAS, He was truly a trailblazer for the environment; armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Henry L.

Diamond's life was a portrait of service, a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; he will be greatly missed by many; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Henry L. Diamond.