

2013-J5889

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 25th Anniversary of Hudson Highlands Land Trust

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to commend those illustrious organizations of the State of New York whose focus and intent is to promote environmental conservation and protection as well as to encourage the appreciation and understanding of the environment as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Hudson Highlands Land Trust; and

WHEREAS, On Sunday afternoon, March 12, 1989, twenty-one residents of the Hudson Highlands met at Castle Rock, the Garrison, New York home of Douglas and Sarah Banker; they came together due to the mounting development pressure in the Highlands, and were determined to preserve the community's rural character and scenic beauty; and

WHEREAS, Upon completion of the meeting, the Hudson Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) was a reality: a board, an executive committee, and a slate of officers had been elected, and a two-year plan of action had been adopted; in addition, a modest start-up budget was approved and staff was limited to one person, working half time; and

WHEREAS, On April 24, 1989, the Hudson Highlands Land Trust was issued a Certificate of Incorporation by the State of New York; more than two decades later, the organization has a three-person, professional staff including an Executive Director, a Director of Outreach and Development, and a Director of Land Preservation; and

WHEREAS, The Hudson Highlands Land Trust owns 39 acres outright, holds conservation easements on 59 properties and has permanently preserved 1,300 acres from development; and

WHEREAS, Initially, the mission area of HHLT was limited to Philipstown, New York; in 2004, recognizing that conservation is a regional issue, and that unplanned development in one community can seriously affect the scenery, ecology and land values in many others, the board doubled the mission area to include Putnam Valley, Highlands and Cornwall, and the Villages of Highland Falls and Cornwall-on-Hudson; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Hudson Highlands Land Trust was permitted by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) to be a first-round applicant for accreditation; the staff mounted an intensive effort to meet the numerous and exacting criteria for accreditation; and

WHEREAS, HHLT became one of the first 39 land trusts Nationwide to receive LTA accreditation in September of 2008, certifying a land trust's adherence to LTA Standards and Practices, and creating increased public trust in the organization, confidence in its work and acceptance of its advocacy efforts; and

WHEREAS, With land conservation at the heart of its mission for the past 25 years, HHLT has also made great strides in public policy, outreach and education; they have worked closely with the towns of Philipstown and Putnam Valley as they have revised comprehensive plans and zoning codes; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Hudson Highlands Land Trust is working to expand its presence and involvement in the communities on the Hudson's West Bank; HHLT has also expanded its outreach efforts to include events and programming to inform and involve the greater community of its mission; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to recognize Hudson Highlands Land Trust, for its unwavering commitment to

the citizens of New York State, as it provides an uncompromising standard of excellence in the delivery of superlative community service; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of organizations such as Hudson Highlands Land Trust, which

has worked tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Hudson Highlands Land Trust; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Garrison, New York.