

BY: Senator SERRANO

MOURNING the death of Robin Dropkin, unwavering champion of public lands and environmental protection

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay just tribute to the memory of those prominent individuals whose creative talents have contributed to the environmental and recreational enrichment of the citizens of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Born in New York City on December 8, 1952, Robin Dropkin's passion for environmental stewardship began at an early age, fostered by a love of gardening and a deep knowledge of flora and fauna; and

WHEREAS, Robin Dropkin earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in 1975 and went on to earn a master's degree in environmental studies from Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire, to share her commitment to environmental protection with the next generation of environmental stewards; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, Robin Dropkin was named the Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and transformed the organization into Albany's leading statewide public lands nonprofit organization, creating a legacy of advocacy, outdoor recreational opportunities, and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, Seeing an opportunity to expand recreational opportunities while protecting our precious natural spaces, Robin Dropkin launched the Genesee Valley Greenway Project in 1991 to connect a dozen communities between Letchworth State Park and the Erie Canal in Rochester, which spurred an advocacy campaign to create the State Park Infrastructure Fund the following year; and

WHEREAS, After early successes, in 1993, Robin Dropkin spearheaded the report "Preserve & Protect: Challenges Facing New York's State Park System," the first analysis of the beleaguered conditions facing New York's state park system, and which led to the organization of the first Statewide Parks Conference in 1997; and

WHEREAS, As a method of drawing attention to the potential for a unique statewide asset in a completed, 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail running from Buffalo to Albany, Robin Dropkin launched "Cycling the Erie Canal," an eight-day bicycle tour from Buffalo to Albany that highlighted the opportunity to create an iconic statewide trail, brought economic development to communities across New York, and which has given more than 10,000 people from all parts of the globe the adventure of a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, Robin Dropkin led the release of "Parks at a Turning Point," a landmark report documenting crumbling infrastructure at state parks and historic sites which exponentially grew the coalition

advocating for public lands in New York, leading to a capacity building grant program for nonprofits that champion our park and trails in 2008, and the release of the first Economic Impact Study of the New York State Park System in 2009; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Robin Dropkin and her coalition of park and public land advocates led the grassroots fight to prevent the closure of 88 state parks threatened with closure due to budget constraint, which culminated in a successful advocacy campaign securing significant annual capital funding for state parks and historic sites which continued into 2015; and

WHEREAS, Decades of advocacy and grassroots development efforts by Parks & Trails New York came to fruition in 2020 when the Empire State Trail was completed, closing gaps on the Erie Canalway Trail and the Hudson River Valley Greenway and allowing New York State to boast the longest state multi-use trail in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Robin Dropkin continued to lead on a myriad of initiatives, programs, and coalition priorities that aimed to expand, steward, enhance, and improve public access to our iconic state parks system, and increase the opportunities for environmental education and outdoor recreation until her passing in early 2023; and

WHEREAS, She is survived by her husband, Chip Frank; daughter; Mara Simon, and her children, Shoshana and Jacob; and son, Dan Dropkin-Frank; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize those who have contributed extensively to the environmental and recreational achievements of this great Empire State and Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Robin Dropkin, unwavering champion of public lands and environmental protection; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Robin Dropkin.