

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

J O I N T R E S O L U T I O N

**SUPPORTING THE PRESERVATION OF HILLSDALE AS A "FOREST AND WILDLIFE
RESERVATION" CONSISTENT WITH THE WISHES OF MR. DE COPPET AS
INSTRUCTED BY THE TERMS OF HIS WILL**

Introduced By: Senator Catherine Cool Rumsey

Date Introduced: March 05, 2014

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Environmental Management)

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Theakston de Coppet, formerly of the Town of Richmond, Rhode
2 Island, now deceased, owned 1825.20 acres of land located on Hillsdale Road in the Town of
3 Richmond, consisting of woodlands, wetland and streams with frontage on the Beaver River,
4 property commonly known as "Hillsdale"; and

5 WHEREAS, Hillsdale is located in the designated Hillsdale Historical and Archeological
6 District, containing remnants of nineteenth century rural industrial development including
7 foundations for a water powered stone mill, a woolen mill and a dye house, a cider mill, a dance
8 hall and store and worker housing; and

9 WHEREAS, Hillsdale contains a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long section of the Beaver River, a major
10 tributary to the Pawcatuck River, which said river's 300 square mile watershed comprises most of
11 southwestern Rhode Island and extends into Connecticut; and

12 WHEREAS, The Pawcatuck River supports roughly 70 percent of Rhode Island's
13 globally imperiled species and provides abundant clean groundwater which serves as the sole
14 source of drinking water for more than 60,000 local residents; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. de Coppet bequeathed Hillsdale to the Theakston de Coppet Trust
16 currently managed by Bank of America together with instructions, restrictions, and limitations,
17 including life tenancies, for use and occupation of Hillsdale; and

18 WHEREAS, The last remaining heir and life tenant are now deceased; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. de Coppet, instructed the Trust that upon the death of all heirs and life

1 tenants, to transfer Hillsdale to the State of Rhode Island upon an act of the General Assembly to
2 accept Hillsdale and agree to terms of his will and instructions; and

3 WHEREAS, The terms of Mr. de Coppet's will included a provision for 8/40ths of the
4 income of the Trust be paid to the state for the sole purpose of the maintenance and development
5 of Hillsdale; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. de Coppet stipulated that Hillsdale be preserved as a "Forest and
7 Wildlife Reservation" in perpetuity; now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence
9 Plantations hereby recognizes the natural, historic, and ecological significance of Hillsdale and
10 acknowledges the foresight and wisdom of Mr. de Coppet in his desire to preserve Hillsdale in
11 perpetuity as a sanctuary; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly hereby supports the preservation of Hillsdale
13 as a "Forest and Wildlife Reservation" and the usage and management of the property and
14 proceeds of the Trust consistent with the wishes of Mr. de Coppet as instructed by the terms of
15 the will; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That this General Assembly respectfully requests the Rhode Island
17 Department of Environmental Management to consent to the conveyance of Hillsdale from the
18 Estate of Theakston de Coppet to the state and to accept care, control, and custody of Hillsdale;
19 and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
21 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, and
22 the Director of the Department of Environmental Management.

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