A RESOLUTION honoring the 50th anniversary of the Protest Hike, which led to the undamming of Red River Gorge, and the award-winning Kentucky Afield Radio documentary "Kentucky's Red November."

"It is a country of over towering edges. Again and again, walking down from the wooded ridgetops above Red River Gorge one comes into the sound of water...The slopes are thickly shrubbed with rhododendron, darkened by the heavy green shade of hemlocks...There are the enclosing sounds of the water falling...Looking and listening are as important as tasting. One drinks in the sense of being in a good place."—Wendell Berry, The Unforeseen Wilderness

WHEREAS, Red River Gorge welcomes 500,000 visitors annually; and

WHEREAS, known for its multitude of hiking trails, its abundant species of wildlife, and its world-class rock climbing, Red River Gorge is a true treasure of our Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, in a response to decades of flooding in the Powell County community of Clay City, the United States Army Corps of Engineers made the decision to dam the Red River Gorge to create a flood-control lake. By 1967, as work was preparing to begin, this plan to create Red River Lake was met with immediate backlash from environmental groups worried about the ecological protection and conservation; and

WHEREAS, spearheaded by the Sierra Club's Cumberland Chapter, direct and organized opposition to the dam was formed; and

WHEREAS, this opposition was notable because of how early in the fight for ecological protection it would fall. The Sierra Club's protest would come before the 1970 signing of the National Environmental Policy Act, and it would pre-date the Environmental Protection Agency by two years; and

WHEREAS, members of the Sierra Club, which included Jim Kowalski, Carroll Tichenor, and Oscar Geralds, would ultimately send a postcard to Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas asking him for his presence at Red River Gorge in an attempt to stop
the damming of the river, and Justice Douglas would surprisingly respond in the affirmative--also by postcard--if only members of the group would pay for his airfare to and from Lexington; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 1967, Justice Douglas arrived at Red River Gorge, and the famous Protest Hike would occur; and

WHEREAS, the Protest Hike would have reverberations for many years to come, and would ultimately be the cornerstone of the fight against the damming of Red River Gorge, bringing Kentucky into the national headlines; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Kentucky Governor Julian Carroll would enter the fray. Urged by the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and many other environmental groups to halt construction of the dam, Governor Carroll would research the Gorge and its many merits as a special place in this Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, on September 11, 1975, Governor Carroll would offer his decision that he could find "no compelling reason to build the Red River Dam," citing the ecological bounties, archeological footprints of our Appalachian heritage, and the breathtaking natural beauty of Red River Gorge; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, Kentucky Afield Radio, a production of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, produced "Kentucky's Red November," a radio drama telling the story of this conflict; and

WHEREAS, "Kentucky's Red November," produced by Charlie Baglan, would win first place for Audio Communications from the National Association of Government Communicators; and

WHEREAS, it is rightful that this body recognize those Kentuckians who have fought to uphold the natural beauty of this Commonwealth, and to honor the courageous spirit of Clay City residents in balancing the devotion to homeplace with the power and majesty of nature; and

WHEREAS, in so doing, the members on this day acknowledge the 50th
anniversary of the Protest Hike; commend the hard work of the men and women who so
selflessly gave of their time and expertise to protect one of Kentucky's natural wonders,
Red River Gorge; and acknowledge the Kentucky Afield Radio production of "Kentucky's
Red November," which so artfully brings to life the events of the Protest Hike and the
landmark decisions it would help to bring about;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of

Kentucky:

 Section 1. The members of the Senate hereby honor the 50th anniversary of the
Protest Hike at Red River Gorge.

 Section 2. The members honor and commend the hard work of Kentucky Afield
Radio for the production of "Kentucky's Red November," a radio drama that brilliantly
highlights the struggles arising from the proposed Red River Lake project.

 Section 3. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
Resolution to Senator Julian M. Carroll.