

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 371

Commending Michael S. Rolband.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 4, 2021
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 2021

WHEREAS, Michael S. Rolband, an esteemed environmental engineer and advocate who has helped guide sustainable development in the Commonwealth for three decades, retires in 2021; and

WHEREAS, Michael "Mike" Rolband prepared for his career as an environmental engineer and development expert at Cornell University, where he received a bachelor's degree in civil and environmental engineering in 1980, a master's degree in civil engineering in 1981, and a master's degree in business administration in 1982; and

WHEREAS, Mike Rolband founded Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI) in 1991 to help private and public entities navigate local, state, and national environmental regulations by applying informed and innovative engineering strategies; and

WHEREAS, starting as a one-man firm, WSSI would ultimately carry a staff of more than 210 employees to implement thousands of projects across Northern Virginia; acquired by The Davey Tree Expert Company in 2014, the company continued to be guided by Mike Rolband as it expanded throughout the Commonwealth and into Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida; and

WHEREAS, under Mike Rolband's visionary leadership, WSSI established the first mitigation bank in the Commonwealth in 1994, an enterprise in which the environmental impact of a development project is compensated by greater preservation and restoration efforts in neighboring areas, diminishing the net loss across the wider environment; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Mike Rolband has offered policymakers valued perspectives that have helped to shape legislation regulating stormwater management, mitigation banking, and wetlands and stream preservation; and

WHEREAS, instrumental to the development of pivotal wetlands legislation that was signed into law during the 2000 Session of the General Assembly, Mike Rolband has long been a key figure on technical advisory committees steering the Commonwealth's policies and regulations relating to wetlands, streams, and mitigation banking; and

WHEREAS, through his service on numerous boards, committees, and work groups, Mike Rolband has promoted responsible, ecologically conscious development and the preservation of the Commonwealth's wetlands and streams; and

WHEREAS, understanding the importance of applied research to the future of mitigation banking and other preservation strategies, Mike Rolband established the Wetland Research Initiative (WRI) in 2007, providing millions of dollars in grants to scholars and graduate students to probe questions vital to the success of the industry; he has since amplified these efforts with the establishment of the Stream Restoration Initiative (SRI) and the Resource Protection Group, Inc., which oversees WRI and SRI; and

WHEREAS, since 2017, Mike Rolband has served as a professor at Cornell University, sharing invaluable experience and expertise with future civil engineers tasked with protecting the nation's wetlands and streams; and

WHEREAS, through myriad affiliations in professional organizations and by regularly publishing and presenting lectures to stakeholders and other concerned bodies, Mike Rolband has established himself as a leader of the preservation and development communities, both in the Commonwealth and beyond; and

WHEREAS, numerous awards and accolades from the Commonwealth, Fairfax County, and Reston, as well as several prominent organizations such as the American Council of Engineering Companies and the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, serve as testament to Mike Rolband's remarkable career; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Michael S. Rolband, an accomplished environmental engineer and advocate and founder of Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., on the occasion of his retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Michael S. Rolband as an expression of the General Assembly's profound admiration for his extraordinary service to the Commonwealth and best wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement.