

In Support Of House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 543, An Act Cited As The “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013”, Which Would Clarify Presumptions Relating To The Exposure Of Certain Veterans Who Served In The Vicinity Of the Republic of Vietnam

Referred to: The Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee (Chairman David B. Donaldson and Legislators Archer, Greene, Lopez, and Wawro)

Chairman of the Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee, David B. Donaldson, and Committee Members Legislators Archer, Greene, Lopez and Wawro offer the following:

WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, the United States military sprayed 22 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991, to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to a 2001 directive, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs only grants benefits to Agent Orange-exposed veterans who served on the ground or in the rivers of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, those who served off the coast of Vietnam, otherwise known as “Blue Water Navy Veterans”, are not covered; and

WHEREAS, the 2001 policy further requires the Vietnam veterans themselves to furnish written documentation that they had “boots on the ground” in the country, making it difficult for countless United States Navy, Marine and Air Force veterans to pursue their claims for benefits; and

WHEREAS, various studies and reports indicate Agent Orange as a wide spreading chemical that was able to reach Navy Ships docked close to the shore of Vietnam, operated in Vietnam’s close coastal waters and/or sent smaller vessels to shore through the air and waterborne distribution routes; and

WHEREAS, more than thirty (30) Veterans Service Organizations support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature urges the United States House of Representatives to ensure the passage of H.R.-543 within the 113th Congressional Session; and, be it further

