

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 861
By Clabough

A RESOLUTION to commend Ernest C. Blankenship for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Environment and Conservation.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, it is also appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who, in their years of work, have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Ernest C. "Ernie" Blankenship is one such person who has served with distinction with the Department of Environment and Conservation as Special Assistant to the Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, after many years of honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee, Mr. Blankenship will retire from public service on June 30, 2002; and

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WHEREAS, the longevity of Mr. Blankenship's impeccable career has stemmed from his tremendous love for public service and his ongoing commitment to his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blankenship's desire to ensure good government for all Tennesseans has served as motivation to perform his duties in a manner beyond reproach; and

WHEREAS, born in 1935, Mr. Blankenship is a graduate of Maryville High School and a native of Maryville, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after earning his high school diploma, Mr. Blankenship enlisted in the United States Navy, where he diligently served as a member of the Admiral's Staff of the 7th Fleet on the Island of Formosa; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished service with the Navy, Mr. Blankenship worked with cryptographic communications and earned top-secret cryptographic communications security clearance; and

WHEREAS, due to his outstanding service on Formosa, Ernest C. Blankenship was awarded the China Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, after his discharge from Navy in 1958, Mr. Blankenship enrolled at the University of Tennessee, where he was a member of the school's Baseball Team; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated and proficient scholar, Mr. Blankenship graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1962 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration; and

WHEREAS, from 1962-1968, Ernest Blankenship worked for the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan; as an employee of the Ford Motor Company, he served as a Transportation Analyst for many of the company's Detroit operations; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, Mr. Blankenship accepted a position as the Assistant Director for the Center for Industrial Services at the University of Tennessee; he provided industrial consulting services in this position until 1975; and

WHEREAS, he continued his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee as Director of Existing Industry of the Industrial Development Division, in which position he diligently served until 1977; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Ernest C. Blankenship became Vice President of the Tennessee Manufacturers Association (now the Tennessee Association of Business) which he astutely served until 1989; and

WHEREAS, during his exemplary tenure with the Association, Mr. Blankenship lobbied on issues relative to environmental protection and coordinated technical policy on regulatory matters; he also promoted the industrial perspective that economic development and environmental protection could successfully co-exist in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, he also lobbied for numerous laws that addressed the concerns and needs of business, while also protecting the public and the environment; he was instrumental in drafting and developing the Tennessee Hazardous Waste Act, Tennessee's initial Superfund, the OSHA Hazardous Chemical Right to Know Law and numerous other pieces of legislation to help businesses safely and efficiently reduce hazardous waste; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blankenship also initiated the Association's Environmental Awards to encourage businesses to surpass the demands of environmental laws and regulations; he also was an advocate and principal lobbyist for Tennessee's safety belt law and steered to passage legislation that brought the State into conformity with other states in terms of allowing larger capacity freight hauling trucks; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, Ernest C. Blankenship began his exemplary tenure with the Department of Environment and Conservation as the Small Business Advocate, the Administrator for Environmental Assistance Programs and as Special Assistant to the Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, as an outstanding employee of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr. Blankenship developed the TDEC Stewardship Awards, aggressively

marketed *The Tennessee Conservationist* magazine and participated in the development of the Environmental Protection Agency's first national audit policy for small businesses; he also co-sponsored and appeared in the first national teleconference of a small business industry group regulated under the Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990; and

WHEREAS, Ernest C. Blankenship has served the Department of Environment and Conservation with acumen and alacrity, and he has earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike for his unwavering dedication to the protection of Tennessee's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, an active member of the Brentwood community, Mr. Blankenship was instrumental in the city becoming incorporated; he has participated in numerous civic organizations, including the Tennessee Historical Society, the American Legion, the Tennessee Conservation League, The Nature Conservancy and the Third Century Club of the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a man of impeccable character, Mr. Blankenship is a member of the Brentwood United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, his professional and civic accomplishments aside, Ernest C. Blankenship is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his loving wife, Pat Davis Blankenship; and

WHEREAS, he is also the proud father of two children, Nancy and Doug, and four grandchildren, Katherine, Coulton, Jace and Tanner; and

WHEREAS, his remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, he is an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, and he epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Ernie Blankenship is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we extend to Ernest C. Blankenship our best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors, even as we pay tribute to his exemplary career spent in service to the State of Tennessee as a dedicated and responsible steward of the environment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.