

Reps. McDowell, Lahti, Gillard, Lindberg, Casperson, Sak, Ball, Bieda, Booher, Brandenburg, Brown, Byrnes, Clack, Condino, Constan, Espinoza, Gonzales, Hammel, Hammon, Hansen, Hopgood, Robert Jones, LaJoy, Kathleen Law, LeBlanc, Moore, Polidori, Shaffer, Alma Smith, Spade, Vagnozzi, Valentine and Meadows offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 394.

A resolution declaring Paradise as the Wild Blueberry Capital of the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Paradise, Michigan, once forested in stands of huge white pine, was logged from the 1880s to the 1920s. The cut-over land, swept by fires, provided a natural environment for wild blueberries, one of nature's "pioneer" plants. Blueberry bushes flourished in the sandy, acidic soil. Fields of "blue gold" covered vast areas and gave rise to a new industry; and

Whereas, At a time when cultivated blueberries were unknown, Paradise's wild berries were in great demand. Up to 1,500 laborers moved into the area during the summers of the 1920s and 1930s to pick berries. Shoreline steamers transported the blueberry cargo to Detroit, Chicago and Buffalo; and

Whereas, The local blueberry industry peaked during the Great Depression, but declined with the advent of World War II when labor for picking was scarce, and the natural succession of vegetation and forest reduced the number of blueberry bushes; and

Whereas, Wild blueberries still thrive in the area. The low-bush varieties, found in open, sunny areas, ripen from late July through August. High-bush berries may be found in shade and ripen from late August through September; and

Whereas, The Paradise community celebrates this local heritage with its annual Wild Blueberry Festival. The Wild Blueberry Festival began in 1983, therefore, on August 15, 16 and 17, 2008, the Paradise community will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Wild Blueberry Festival; and

Whereas, Because blueberry production has steadily inclined on a national level, it has become important to recognize and celebrate Paradise's integral role in this thriving agricultural market; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body offer this expression of our highest tribute to honor Paradise's historic place in Michigan with the recognition as the Wild Blueberry Capital of the state.