SENATE RESOLUTION

8688

By Senator Brown

WHEREAS, Kris Watkins is president and chief executive officer of Visit TRI-CITIES, the nonprofit organization that markets Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland; and

WHEREAS, Kris Watkins was introduced to the Tri-Cities while working in the field of professional relocation, and later learned the importance of tourism as project manager for the canyon lakes community in Kennewick; and

WHEREAS, In 1994 Kris Watkins assumed the position of president and CEO for what was then known as the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau; and

WHEREAS, She was instrumental in establishing such Tri-Cities community gathering places as the Three Rivers Convention Center, the TRAC Center, the REACH Interpretive Center, and a twenty-three mile continuous paved rivershore trail, and in boosting the Tri-Cities economy through increased visitor spending and added tourism-related jobs; and

WHEREAS, Kris Watkins was a key advocate for the 2003 state law that allows for the creation of tourism promotion areas, and has generated millions of dollars for communities across Washington; and

WHEREAS, Her record of leadership includes being a founding member of the Washington State Tourism Commission, and serving on the Washington Tourism Alliance Board of Directors, in addition to working with the Tourism Promotion Program with the Port of Seattle, the Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations Association, and the AG Forestry Leadership Program; and

WHEREAS, Kris Watkins has not only earned the respect of her peers over her twenty-plus years in the Tri-Cities but under her leadership the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau received the 2009 Governor's Smart Communities Award, and she was named the 2004 Washington State Tourism Professional of the Year award among other honors; and

WHEREAS, The self-proclaimed "city girl turned Franklin County farm wife" enjoys golf, traveling, and spending time with her husband, Clark, a retired farmer, and their two children and grandson;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honor Kris Watkins upon her retirement as a long time champion for the Tri-Cities and for Washington, commend her dedication, leadership and innovative spirit, and recognize her devotion to Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to Kris Watkins and to Visit TRI-CITIES.