

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.2007-4630, by Representatives Moeller, Ross, Pedersen, Takko, Barlow, Seaquist, Hudgins, Hunt, Ericks, Appleton, Fromhold, Ormsby, Goodman, Morrell, Crouse, Eddy, Kristiansen, Rodne, McCoy, Wallace and Flannigan

WHEREAS, History was made on the morning of June 20, 1937, with the landing of Russian aviator Valery Chkalov, and his crew, Georgy Baidukov and Alexander Belyakov, in their single-engine aircraft ANT-25 at Pearson Army Airfield in Vancouver, Washington; and

WHEREAS, Chkalov completed the first nonstop flight across the North Pole setting a world aviation record by flying for 63 hours and 16 minutes over the North Pole from Schelkovo Air Field near Moscow, Russia to Vancouver, Washington; and

WHEREAS, In an international feat of great aviation significance, Chkalov set down at the Pearson Army Airfield in Vancouver, Washington; the oldest continuously operating general aviation airfield in the United States, where he and his crew were greeted by General George C. Marshall, commander of the Vancouver Barracks; and

WHEREAS, Citizens throughout the world were following this first transpolar flight, on radio and in the newspaper, as Valery Chkalov spoke on NBC Radio from the balcony of the stately Victorian-era Army military residence of General Marshall; and

WHEREAS, Chkalov proclaimed that like the Volga and Columbia Rivers, which flow on the same planet and ultimately merge into one and the same World Ocean, without interfering with one another, "Our peoples . . . should live in the same world in peace. Our joint efforts should beautify the ocean of human life"; and

WHEREAS, In the intervening years, the polar bridge established by the Chkalov flight has been the basis for numerous visits and exchanges between local residents and citizens and with Valery Chkalov's family and village, and has been kept alive by the long established Vancouver Chkalov Transpolar Flight Committee and, since 1999, the Chkalov Cultural Exchange Committee; and

WHEREAS, In 1975, Vancouver citizens dedicated a monument honoring the bravery of Valery Chkalov and his crew, thus making this flight the only one in the world with commemoratives marking both departure and arrival points; and

WHEREAS, The Russian Federation and many individual Russians have responded with friendship to this expression of international goodwill by visiting the City of Vancouver to lay flowers at the monument, and by hosting groups from Vancouver in Russia; and

WHEREAS, June 20, 2007, is the 70th Anniversary of the Transpolar Flight, and events honoring this historic event are being held in Russia this year as part of an official "State Event"; and

WHEREAS, The Chkalov Cultural Exchange Committee, a nonprofit organization in the state of Washington, along with the City of Vancouver, Clark County, and other governmental entities and officials are planning events and activities in the Vancouver-Portland area for an invited delegation from Russia;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives hereby acknowledge this historic flight and call upon the citizens of the State of Washington to join the citizens of Russia in celebrating the 70th Anniversary, and we extend a warm welcome to all Russian visitors who travel to Vancouver to participate in these events and encourage all Washington citizens to participate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the City of Vancouver, Clark County, the Chkalov Cultural Exchange Committee, Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, and the Russian Federation Minister of Defense Sergey Borisovich Ivanov.