CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas Mohava Marie “Mo” Niemi, as a single mother of two young boys in the 1940s, began her quest to improve her coastal community; and

Whereas Mo Niemi’s entrepreneurial spirit led her to launch coffee shops, restaurants and a radio talk show; and

Whereas in 1946, Mo Niemi and her friend Freddie Kent started a café called “Freddie and Mo’s,” and when Freddie was diagnosed with cancer, Mo bought her share and the small café became known simply as “Mo’s,” which was the start of a legendary business in Newport, Oregon; and

Whereas Mo Niemi and her restaurants hosted dignitaries such as Governor Tom McCall, Senator Mark Hatfield and Representative Les AuCoin; and

Whereas people began visiting from all over the world after hearing about the restaurant, and even national news commentator Paul Harvey came to the coast and asked, “Is there a Mo here? I’m supposed to meet her”; and

Whereas Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Henry Fonda, Lee Remick and the entire cast and crew of “Sometimes a Great Notion,” the movie made from Oregon author Ken Kesey’s novel, became friends of Mo Niemi’s while filming in Newport; and

Whereas Senator Robert Kennedy came through Newport on his presidential campaign in May 1968 and liked the chowder so much he took a couple of buckets with him on the plane to Los Angeles, California, and he even invited Mo Niemi to join him on the trip; and

Whereas Mo Niemi politely declined Senator Kennedy’s invitation and bitterly regretted her decision when just a few days later Kennedy was shot to death after a campaign speech at the Ambassador Hotel; and

Whereas the summer of 1968 also earmarked the opening of Mo’s Annex, sister to the original Mo’s, across the street in Newport, overlooking Yaquina Bay; and

Whereas four years later, in 1972, Mo’s West in Otter Rock, Oregon, opened; and

Whereas by the mid-1970s, the idea of packaging chowder base and selling it frozen to retail outlets was born, and today customers can buy frozen chowder base in many grocery stores and can also order fresh chowder base online to be shipped anywhere in the continental United States; and

Whereas in 1999, Mo’s clam chowder was a featured entrée at the first luncheon ever held at
the Smithsonian Institution, which celebrated the best American regional foods; and

Whereas Mo Niemi tirelessly promoted “Newport, the Friendliest,” bringing the slogan to life
with her time, energy and money; and

Whereas Mo Niemi was one of the founding pioneers of the Newport Seafood and Wine Festival,
which has become the longest running such festival in the State of Oregon; and

Whereas Mo’s was awarded the 2001 Small Business Administration (SBA) Oregon business of
the year and received the first runner-up award in the national SBA competition from President
George W. Bush; and

Whereas Mo Niemi passed away in 1992 at the age of 79, but her spirit lives on in her wildly
successful family-run business and the vibrant community she did so much to foster and grow; and

Whereas a trip to the Oregon coast is not complete without a stop at Mo’s; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly, congratulate Mo’s Seafood and
Chowder for 75 years of successful business, and we recognize and honor Mo Niemi’s larger than
life personality for being the spark that lit the fire of the tourism industry on the Oregon coast.

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