

Rep. Dianda offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 38.

A resolution to urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to acquire land surrounding Houghton-Douglass Falls in the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Whereas, The falls are named in honor the first State Geologist, Dr. Douglass Houghton and his cousin and assistant, Columbus Christopher Douglass. Houghton convinced the new Michigan legislature to sponsor the exploration of the Upper Peninsula and was the first to recognize the enormous economic potential of the Keweenaw's copper ore bodies. After Houghton's untimely drowning death in 1845, C.C. Douglass spent the remainder of his career developing the vast mineral resources of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Whereas, The falls, located on Hammell Creek, are the tallest in Michigan at well over 100 feet. They are described as large, dangerous, and enticing, with several streams bouncing off the sharp, volcanic rock. At the top, an explorer has a beautiful view of Torch Lake below in the creek valley. The waterfalls are listed in numerous guides as a must-see destination for those exploring the waterfalls of the Keweenaw Peninsula and are a significant local and tourist attraction; and

Whereas, Houghton-Douglass Falls are located on private property. Although access has been implicitly allowed in past decades, the landowner would like to see the acreage in public ownership to provide visitors with clear signage directing them to the falls and a safe path to a lookout spot. The falls have been the site of severe and even fatal falling accidents; and

Whereas, Houghton County recently updated its recreation plan and found a great deal of support for public acquisition of the lands surrounding the waterfalls. Public ownership would allow the county to provide safe access to the falls. Sixty-three acres surrounding the waterfalls border state-owned rail trails and state highway M-26, making this a strategic acquisition that promises greater access for the people of Michigan; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to acquire land surrounding Houghton-Douglass Falls in the Keweenaw Peninsula; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Department of Natural Resources.