

Resolution H.J.R. 21, "Keystone Species Recognition – to study and consider naming Groundhog Day 'Prairie Dog Day' in recognition, and for protection, of a keystone species."

**Prairie Dog Day
February 2nd**

WHEREAS, Prairie dogs are inextricably linked with the entire prairie grassland ecosystem, and as a keystone species have far-reaching ecological effects upon the landscapes where they live; and

WHEREAS, Prairie dog towns provide an abundant prey base for predators such as ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, coyotes, mountain plovers, burrowing owls, bobcats, badgers, and, historically, the black-footed ferret; and

WHEREAS, America's grasslands have shrunk to less than 1 percent of their historic range and the prairie dog's population is down to 2 percent of its historical numbers; and

WHEREAS, February 2, 2011 and every February 2nd there upon will be the Western version of Groundhog Day, and will be a celebration of the keystone species of the western grasslands; and

WHEREAS, The State of Utah is home to the federally threatened Utah prairie dog where only, 10,000 individuals remain; and

WHEREAS, The Utah prairie dog has declined from approximately 100,000 to 10,000 individuals- a roughly 90% disappearance of their historic habitat; and

WHEREAS, The State of Utah is a leader in habitat protection and wildlife management, and has protected prairie dogs and their ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, The State of Utah supports educating the public about the vital role prairie dogs play in maintaining healthy habitat for many of the animals that make Utah a special place;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, , , Utah do hereby designate February 2, 2011 as

PRAIRIE DOG DAY

in the State of Utah, and urge all residents to take part in events and activities planned to celebrate the prairie dog – our keystone species of the western grasslands – and further urge the community, educators, and advocates to plan educational activities in the classroom and the field on and around Prairie Dog Day to provide opportunities for learning about the vital role prairie dogs play on the prairie and the different ways people can help to conserve our native species.

HENCE, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Utah to be affixed this 2nd day of February, 2011.
