

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the students of Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland, New York, upon the occasion of publishing MISTER KARNER BLUE

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations and individuals dedicating their purposeful work to increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, the natural resources of New York, recognizing the role all citizens have in protecting the environment and the quality of life in this Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, it is the practice of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those young people within the great Empire State who have made strong contributions to their communities and who serve as role models for their peers; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the students of Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland, New York, upon the occasion of publishing MISTER KARNER BLUE, a new children's book, written for kids by kids, and featuring the federally-endangered Karner blue butterfly; and

WHEREAS, The Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission celebrated with a book signing party on Saturday, March 9, 2013, at the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center, Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides Melissa samuelis*) shall be the official State endangered species, and the lady bug (*Coccinella novemnotata*) shall be the official insect of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, The newly released MISTER KARNER BLUE is the result of a unique collaboration between the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland, New York and in that regard, presents a story within a story; and

WHEREAS, This scientifically-accurate, yet fanciful tale for young children was created by students from the school's Pine Bush Project; and

WHEREAS, This is a groundbreaking program in which 6th and 7th graders conduct long-term studies in ecological restoration and work to raise Karner blue butterflies for release in newly-restored Preserve habitat; and

WHEREAS, For the last 15 years, the 6th and 7th graders of Farnsworth Middle School have been assisting the Commission's conservation efforts through a cutting-edge, nationally-innovative program; and

WHEREAS, The book stems from one special year when a student scrapbook project grew into a collaboration with teachers, volunteers and Commission staff to create this truly magical little picture-story book; and

WHEREAS, Each year, in partnership with the Commission and under the guidance of the school project's founder, Dr. Alan Fiero, the students participate in authentic scientific research including a captive rearing program for the Karner blue butterfly; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, of the 600 captive-reared butterfly chrysalises the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission had to work with, 400 were reared in partnership with the New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, while 200 were reared at the Farnsworth Middle School; and

WHEREAS, The Albany Pine Bush Preserve is a globally-rare ecosystem hosting over 1,000 known species of butterflies and moths; New York State has the largest variety of butterflies and moths in the United States, with the Preserve providing habitat for more species than any other place in the State; and

WHEREAS, Although the book was a group effort, the primary author is a student named Natasha Permaul; Natasha, now a sophomore in high school,

was a seventh grader at Farnsworth Middle School when she submitted a scrapbook presentation on the life cycle of the Karner blue butterfly for Dr. Fiero's final assignment; and

WHEREAS, The book tells the story of Mr. Karner Blue and his dependence on the complex and rare habitat of inland pine barrens; it features artwork by the children and their teacher as well as photos by adult volunteers from the Preserve; and

WHEREAS, The Karner blue butterflies are rare, diminutive, hard to spot, live only three to five days, and are difficult to distinguish from other similar non-endangered butterflies; as caterpillars, they can only eat wild blue lupine which in turn requires the sandy open areas produced by the Preserve's fire-dependent habitat; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, missing for 29 years, the nine-spotted ladybug is back; since 1982, there has not been a single nine-spotted ladybug, the official New York State insect, spotted anywhere in the State; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, the Lost Ladybug Project was established to try and hunt down the native United States insect; by 2006, only five had been found across the entirety of North America, and not a single one in New York State; fortunately, a bunch were found earlier this year on a farm in Amagansett, New York, and now they are being bred in a lab in Cornell, New York; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of organizations and persons such as the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the students of Farnsworth Middle School who work tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the students of Farnsworth Middle School in Guilderland, New York, upon the occasion of publishing MISTER KARNER BLUE; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission and the students of Farnsworth Middle School.