

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2013, as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, The health and well-being of the citizens of the State of New York is of paramount importance to this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease is a common but frequently misunderstood illness that, if not caught early and treated properly, can cause serious health problems; and

WHEREAS, According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health, Lyme Disease was identified and named in 1977, when arthritis was observed in a cluster of children in and around Lyme, Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) designated Lyme Disease as a nationally notifiable disease in January 1991; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease is the most common vector-borne disease in the United States; it is caused by the tick-borne spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is transmitted to the human bloodstream by the bite of various species of ticks; and

WHEREAS, Children aged 5 to 9 and adults in their 50s and 60s experience the highest occurrence of Lyme Disease; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease can cause early symptoms such as rash and flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, headaches, fatigue; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease can be treated with antibiotics if caught early; the disease often goes undetected because it mimics other illnesses or may be misdiagnosed; untreated, Lyme Disease can lead to severe heart, neurological, eye, and joint problems because the bacteria can affect many different organs and organ systems; and

WHEREAS, The best protection against Lyme Disease is to wear light-colored clothing when outdoors and to check one's self carefully for ticks when going back inside; and

WHEREAS, During 2008, a total of 35,198 cases of Lyme Disease were reported in the United States, a 28 percent increase over the previous year; the CDC indicates that the actual number of reported cases of Lyme Disease that meet the CDC criteria is 10 times the amount reported, bringing the actual number of cases that meet the CDC criteria to 351,980 for 2008; and

WHEREAS, The incidence of Lyme Disease is greatest in the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and north central regions of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Due to the large population of deer for ticks to feed on, the occurrence of Lyme Disease in New York State is high; from 1990 to 2008, New York had the highest number of total reported cases of Lyme Disease in the United States, 48 percent higher than Connecticut, the state with the second-highest number of total reported cases; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease accounts for 90 percent of all vector-borne infections in the United States; the ticks that spread Lyme Disease also spread other diseases, such as ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, and other strains of *Borrelia*; all of these diseases in one patient makes diagnosis and treatment more difficult; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that the Lyme Disease reported cases were only 10% of actual cases that meet its surveillance criteria; and

WHEREAS, According to the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, the northeastern United States should prepare for a surge in Lyme disease in the spring of 2012; this surge is in direct correlation to fluctuations in acorns and mouse populations, not the mild winter; and

WHEREAS, Acorn crops vary from year-to-year, with boom-and-bust cycles

influencing the winter survival and breeding success of white-footed mice; these small mammals pack a one-two punch; they are preferred hosts for black-legged ticks and are very effective at transmitting *Borrelia burgdorferi*; and

WHEREAS, Essentially, there was a boom in acorns, followed by a boom in mice; now, on the heels of one of the smallest acorn crops to date, the mouse population is crashing; the scarcity of acorns in the fall of 2011 set up a perfect storm for human Lyme disease risk; and

WHEREAS, Subsequently, during the spring of 2012, there will be a lot of *Borrelia burgdorferi*-infected black-legged ticks in the forests throughout the State of New York looking for a blood meal; instead of finding a white-footed mouse, the tiny black-legged ticks, as small as poppy seeds, are going to find other mammals, and unfortunately, that mammal will be a human being; and

WHEREAS, Lyme Disease Month provides an opportunity to focus on this significant and complex disease, to provide information on and raise public awareness of its causes, effects and treatments, and to underscore important education and research efforts surrounding Lyme and tick-borne diseases; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2013, as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.