

BY: Senator O'MARA

COMMEMORATING the 200th Anniversary of the
founding of the Town of Big Flats, New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the distinguished histories of the communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the Town of Big Flats, New York, in Chemung County, New York; and

WHEREAS, Located between what is now Elmira and Corning, New York, Big Flats was originally inhabited by numerous Native American groups, the largest of which were the Runonvea, who named the fertile and flat land, Atsingnetsing; early settlers shortened the name to Sing Sing, and referred to it as the Great Flatts; and

WHEREAS, After the Native Americans left the area, an act was passed by the State of New York most favorable to persons who would settle in this new land, by giving land grants in March of 1783; and

WHEREAS, Four years later, Christian Myneer (Minier), his wife and seven children came up the river through the "Gateway to Big Flats" and landed on the north side of the Chemung River where he planted an orchard and built the first log house; in March of 1791 he received an official deed and since then, many of his family members have continued to call Big Flats their home; and

WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, other settlers began to arrive, and a Baptist Church was organized in 1807, land for a cemetery donated in 1809, a post office was built in 1809, and the Town of Big Flats (Flatts) was officially established in 1822; and

WHEREAS, The early settlers made a living through lumbering, and by 1850, at least nine saw mills flourished within the town; farming then took over as a main source of income for the residents; and

WHEREAS, Meanwhile, the Feeder Canal had been built from Gibson through Big Flats and joined the Chemung Canal at Horseheads; opened in 1833, the 16-mile waterway brought an influx of traffic through Big Flats bringing coal, grain and lumber to and from Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, In the mid- to late-1800s, the Erie and the Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad were built to accommodate shipping of dairy products and animals; and

WHEREAS, In 1850, the first tobacco was grown in the rich valley soil, making it a main source of income; by 1918, approximately 2,000 acres were cultivated for tobacco and there were five cigar-rolling

factories in the village; and

WHEREAS, The Schweizer Corporation, a sailplane manufacturer, moved to the region and used Harris Hill to launch their products; it soon became known as the Glider Capital of America; and

WHEREAS, Continuing its history of aeronautics, American Airways leased 100 acres of land for an emergency landing strip in 1926-1927, henceforth establishing the Elmira-Corning Regional Airport; from its humble beginnings, the airport has grown to 1,000 of acres with thousands of travelers embarking for destinations around the world; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Town of Big Flats encompasses 26,097 acres of land, has a population of approximately 7,000 residents, and is comprised of 200 businesses; and

WHEREAS, The Town is the home of 13 parks, the Wings of Eagles Discovery Center, the National Soaring Museum, Tanglewood Nature Center and the Big Flats Historical Society's Museum; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the Town of Big Flats continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the Town of Big Flats, New York, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the community of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Edward Fairbrother, Supervisor, the Town of Big Flats, New York.