

BY: Senator ORTT

COMMENDING BIDCO Marine Group divers Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Rocky Hine upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend the caring concern and heroic acts of individuals who take prompt and appropriate action in emergency situations, nobly risking their own lives in an effort to preserve the life of another; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend BIDCO Marine Group divers Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Rocky Hine upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, On Thursday, December 16, 2021, BIDCO Marine Group divers Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Superintendent Rocky Hine were repairing timber cribs which support Bird Island Pier on the Niagara River in Buffalo, New York, when they heard a group of fishermen screaming, with one of them running towards the water with a life preserver; and

WHEREAS, Rocky Hine also grabbed a life ring from the pier, and jumped into the boat with Sean Needham, and sped down the river looking for the man, while Chris Kunzleman ran downstream on top of the river wall with another life ring, keeping the victim in sight; and

WHEREAS, Rescue spotter Chris Kunzleman directed the rescue boat to the exact location of the distraught man, who initially resisted the rescue attempts; knowing hypothermia would quickly set in, Sean Needham dove into the river with one of the company's life preservers around him and swam up to the young man in the water and wrapped his arms around him; and

WHEREAS, Rocky Hine then maneuvered the boat towards them as Sean Needham, with the victim in tow, swam up to the boat, at which point Rocky grabbed the young man and pulled him into the boat; and

WHEREAS, The three good Samaritans knew they had to get the victim warm, so they stripped off his wet clothes while talking to him and trying to calm him down before he went into hypothermia and shock; and

WHEREAS, As soon as they reached the dock, they quickly doused him with hot water to get his body temperature back up; shortly thereafter, EMS arrived and transported the man to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Rocky Hine, in their spontaneous and heroic acts, have so aptly demonstrated their character and compassion for the welfare of others, personifying, by virtue of their actions, the collective concern of ordinary citizens across the community of New York State who voluntarily respond without thought of danger or reward when others are in need of help; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend BIDCO Marine Group divers Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Rocky Hine upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sean Needham, Chris Kunzleman and Rocky Hine.