

BY: Senator O'MARA

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of Watkins Glen
International of Watkins Glen, New York

WHEREAS, Certain organizations empower communities to attract new visitors while capitalizing on local commercial and cultural value; Watkins Glen International is one of those corporations that have had an economic impact on their communities; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and support events of significance which contribute to the entertainment and vitality of the communities they serve and which exemplify the history and development of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Watkins Glen International of Watkins Glen, New York, which was celebrated in 2023; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, Cameron Argetsinger had a vision to introduce European road racing to the Village of Watkins Glen, New York; the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) cooperated with the local Chamber of Commerce and approved the Watkins Glen Grand Prix from 1948-1952; during this time, drivers across the United States raced on a 6.6-mile course on public roads; presently, that circuit is listed in the Registers of Historic Places for New York State and the United States; and

WHEREAS, For the safety of the public, the racing route moved to a 4.6-mile layout located outside Watkins Glen in 1953; three years later, a permanent 2.35-mile circuit was constructed to accommodate auto races and motorsports events from 1956-1970; in 1971, an extensive reconstruction of the course was completed, adding the boot-shaped section; and

WHEREAS, The NASCAR Cup Series utilized this historic racing facility in 1957, 1964, and 1965; since its return in 1986, it continues to entertain crowds of fans; in 1983, NASCAR partnered with Corning Enterprises and purchased the racetrack, renaming it Watkins Glen International; the objectives were an increase in tourism and restoration of the historic landmark; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, International Speedway Corporation (ISC) acquired the facility as the sole owner, investing millions of dollars to improve its profitability by constructing new grandstands, the Media Center, various experiences for the fans, and a complete repaving of the track in 2015; in 2019, NASCAR acquired ISC; and

WHEREAS, During the 75 years of its accommodations to excite racing fans, Watkins Glen International has hosted NASCAR, International Motor Sports Association (IMSA), Sports Car Club of America, Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART), Can-Am, Trans Am, and INDYCAR; from 1961-1980, it

was the home of the United States Formula One Grand Prix; and

WHEREAS, Auto racing legends Mario Andretti, Jeff Gordon, Derek Bell, Nikki Lauda, Dale Earnhardt, and many other drivers have had success at Watkins Glen International; and

WHEREAS, Two natives of New York have claimed victories at the facility; Geoff Bodine triumphed during the NASCAR Cup Series event in 1996, and Steve Park dominated Mark Martin to claim his first NASCAR victory at "The Glen" in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Watkins Glen International has been chosen as "America's Best NASCAR Track" on four occasions; spectacular finishes, including Chase Elliott's capture of his first NASCAR victory at the historic and famous venue, have amazed crowds; on September 15, 2024, the acclaimed racetrack will participate in the NASCAR Cup Series by hosting a Playoff race; and

WHEREAS, Through numerous track events, including IMSA Sportscar Championship, Sports Car Club of America, United States Vintage Grand Prix, NASCAR Cup Series Weekend, and the Finger Lakes Wine Festival, Watkins Glen International provides a lucrative economic impact on the Village of Watkins Glen and neighboring towns, providing entertainment and enjoyment for the spectators who travel nationally and internationally to witness exciting experiences that will thrill fans for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those organizations that have brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Watkins Glen International; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Watkins Glen International.