

BY: M. of A. Schiavoni

HONORING the volunteer firefighters, New York Air National Guard 106th Rescue Wing, and New York State agencies for their valiant efforts in combating the brush fires in Suffolk County, Long Island

WHEREAS, First responders exemplify the power of human compassion and the strength of the American spirit through actions of the most heroic magnitude; their sacrifices and their selfless dedication merit tribute and recognition by all citizens of this great country; and

WHEREAS, On Saturday, March 8, 2025, a brush fire began in Suffolk County, Long Island, burning approximately 400 to 600 acres of land spanning from Center Moriches to Westhampton, New York; and

WHEREAS, The scene required the emergency assistance of around 600 volunteers from 80 fire departments, as well as 10 ambulance crews to help combat the fires; other reinforcements consisting of the New York Air National Guard 106th Rescue Wing, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Fire, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, New York State Department of Transportation, the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, New York State Police, and the help of numerous elected officials arrived on scene to strategize, provide vital resources, and fight the blazes; and

WHEREAS, With increased wind velocities and a lack of adequate precipitation affecting the area, there was an increased opportunity for fire to spread rampantly; and

WHEREAS, Emergency response crews worked diligently for extensive hours knocking down flames and creating a fire break around the perimeter of the fire to prevent its further spread; a fire break is a wide gap of land cleared of natural materials such as trees, bushes, roots, and grasses, reducing the presence of flammable organic materials; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the fires, a state of emergency was declared on March 8, 2025, to prioritize the deployment of ground and air support for immediate fire suppression; four New York National Guard Helicopters conducted 88 water drops totaling more than 24,000 gallons on the same day; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, a burn ban went into effect for Long Island, New York City, and parts of the Hudson Valley on March 9, 2025, to lower the probability of such a detrimental natural disaster of happening again; and

WHEREAS, Thanks to the expeditious and professional efforts of the countless volunteers and responders to the scene, the fires were fully contained by Monday, March 10, 2025; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body cannot express sufficient gratitude to those devoted individuals who recognize that the preservation of life, nature, and property is a sacred responsibility benefitting the greater good; and

WHEREAS, It takes a special dedication, a strong desire to help others and a tireless sense of community to forsake precious time with family and friends to respond to the signal of an emergency; these volunteers heroically performed, above and beyond the call of duty, those responsibilities which define the task of fire protection and selfless service to one's community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the volunteer firefighters, New York Air National Guard 106th Rescue Wing, and various New York State agencies for their valiant efforts in combating the brush fires in Suffolk County, Long Island; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Lawrence Saccante, Chief of Westhampton Beach Fire Department.