

BY: M. of A. Seawright

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim July 2025, as Rip Current Awareness Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious issues which affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim July 2025, as Rip Current Awareness Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Rip currents are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water headed away from shore that aren't easy for recreational swimmers to spot; panicked swimmers who find themselves caught in a rip current often try to swim against it, which only increases their risk of drowning due to fatigue that quickly turns into exhaustion; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, rip currents are more likely to occur at low tide, when waves are breaking over sandbars near the shore; they are commonly found on all surf beaches, including Great Lakes beaches; and

WHEREAS, Rip current speeds can vary from moment to moment and can quickly increase to become dangerous to anyone entering the surf, sweeping even the strongest swimmer away from shore; and

WHEREAS, The average speed of rip currents are 1-2 feet per second, but they have been measured as fast as 8 feet per second, faster than an Olympic swimmer; and

WHEREAS, Rip currents can be very narrow or more than 50 yards wide; sometimes a rip current ends just beyond the line of breaking waves, however, others may continue to flow hundreds of yards offshore; and

WHEREAS, A scientific review of data provided to the United States Lifesaving Association found that there are over 100 deaths each year in the U.S. attributed to rip currents; and

WHEREAS, Rip currents account for over 80% of rescues performed by surf beach lifeguards; and

WHEREAS, Clues that a rip current may be present include: a narrow gap of darker, seemingly calmer water between areas of breaking waves and whitewater; a channel of churning, choppy water; a difference in water color; and/or a line of foam, seaweed or debris moving seaward; and

WHEREAS, When a swimmer is caught in a rip current it is important

to: relax, rip currents do not pull you under; do not swim against the current; you may be able to escape by swimming out of the current in a direction following the shoreline, or toward breaking waves, then at an angle toward the beach; you may be able to escape by floating or treading water if the current circulates back toward shore; if you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself; if you need help, yell and wave for assistance; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, to protect yourself and your family from rip currents, always swim in an area protected by lifeguards, never swim alone, and when in doubt, do not enter the water; and

WHEREAS, Alexandra de Moura, a Nassau County resident, star athlete at Garden City High School, nationally recognized gymnast, and student leader at George Washington University was caught in a rip current and tragically lost her life; and

WHEREAS, Josephine de Moura, Alexandra's mother, has dedicated her life to her beloved daughter's memory by advocating for education on the dangers of rip currents; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that there be greater awareness of the dangers of rip tides, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, State and National levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim July 2025, as Rip Current 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 Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.