

BY: Senator HARCKHAM

COMMENDING The Garden Club of America upon the occasion of partnering with The Great Healthy Yard Project to improve overall water quality and produce healthy backyards

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize those individuals and organizations within the great State of New York that are dedicated to the vital work of environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend The Garden Club of America upon the occasion of partnering with The Great Healthy Yard Project to improve overall water quality and produce healthy backyards; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1913, The Garden Club of America is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised of 201 member clubs and approximately 18,000 club members throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, The Garden Club of America was formed to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening; to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings, conferences, correspondence, and publications; and to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement; and

WHEREAS, Always thinking of ways to further its mission, The Garden Club of America joined forces with The Great Healthy Yard Project to urge individuals to take the pledge and join it in taking care of their yards without synthetic chemicals, and not throw pharmaceuticals and chemicals down their drains and toilets to protect our water quality; and

WHEREAS, Many of these chemicals may be harmful to our health; new evidence has shown even very small amounts may cause an increase in the population of a number of significant diseases; and

WHEREAS, Water is truly a shared resource; the United States Geological Survey found almost every stream, lake, and river sampled, and half of the ground water well across the country tested positive for pesticides; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, homeowners use 10 times more chemicals per acre than farms, and NASA reports there is three times more lawn than corn in the United States; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, Dr. Diane Lewis, a member of the Bedford Garden Club, combined her knowledge of medicine with her love of the environment to create The Great Healthy Yard Project, a movement to

protect our most valuable resources as well as our own health; and

WHEREAS, Through The Great Healthy Yard Project, Dr. Diane Lewis has dedicated her work to teaching others how chemicals end up in our drinking water, and what effects they have on our bodies, as well as teaching alternative ways to take care of our lawns and gardens without harmful chemicals; and

WHEREAS, Throughout New York, 23 garden clubs have agreed to stand with The Great Healthy Yard Project and the State to educate homeowners and garden enthusiasts that the only way to keep pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and pharmaceuticals out of our water and protect the health of our children is to not use them in their yards, and not to dispose of them down their drains and toilets; and

WHEREAS, The New York clubs which endorse The Great Healthy Yard Project and have called upon their members and communities to voluntarily take the pledge are: Adirondack Garden Club, Allyn's Creek Garden Club, Bedford Garden Club, Fort Orange Garden Club, Garden Club of East Hampton, Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson, Garden Club of Lawrence, Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties, Lake and Valley Garden Club, Millbrook Garden Club, North Country Garden Club of Long Island, North Suffolk Garden Club, Philipstown Garden Club, Rochester Garden Club, Rusticus Garden Club, Rye Garden Club, South Side Garden Club of Long Island, Southampton Garden Club, Syracuse Garden Club, The Little Garden Club of Rye, Three Harbors Garden Club, Ulster Garden Club, and Westhampton Garden Club; and

WHEREAS, Through the steadfast efforts of both The Garden Club of America and The Great Healthy Yard Project, citizens across the Nation have pledged to take care of their yards without synthetic pesticides, weed killers and fertilizers except on rare occasions to resolve an infestation or to improve habitat for native plants and wildlife; they have also pledged not to throw pharmaceuticals or chemicals down their drains or toilets; and

WHEREAS, The more people who take the pledge, the cleaner our drinking water will be; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of individuals and organizations such as The Garden Club of America and The Great Healthy Yard Project which work tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend The Garden Club of America upon the occasion of partnering with The Great Healthy Yard Project to improve overall water quality and produce healthy backyards; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Garden Club of America and The Great Healthy Yard Project.