Assembly Resolution No. 366

BY: M. of A. Kelles

COMMEMORATING April 28, 2023, as Arbor Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to support and promote the historic and significant observance of Arbor Day in 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 commemorate Friday, April 28, 2023, as Arbor Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Passed by virtue of the New York State Legislature, May 3, 1888, became the first Arbor Day in the great Empire State; today, New York State celebrates Arbor Day annually on the last Friday in April; and

WHEREAS, This year marks the 151th anniversary of Arbor Day; the first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska; it was the brainchild of Julius Sterling Morton (1832-1902), a Nebraska journalist and politician originally from Michigan; throughout his long and productive career, Julius Morton worked to improve agricultural techniques in his adopted state and throughout the United States when he served as President Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture, but his most important legacy is Arbor Day; and

WHEREAS, Julius Morton felt that Nebraska's landscape and economy would benefit from the wide-scale planting of trees; he set an example himself planting orchards, shade trees and wind breaks on his own farm and he urged his neighbors to follow suit; and

WHEREAS, Julius Morton's real opportunity arrived when he became a member of Nebraska's state board of agriculture; he proposed that a special day be set aside dedicated to tree planting and increasing awareness of the importance of trees; and

WHEREAS, Nebraska's first Arbor Day was an amazing success; more than one million trees were planted; a second Arbor Day took place in 1884, and the young state made it an annual legal holiday in 1885, using April 22nd to coincide with Julius Morton's birthday; and

WHEREAS, In the years following that first Arbor Day, Julius Morton's idea spread beyond Nebraska with Kansas, Tennessee, Minnesota and Ohio, all proclaiming their own Arbor Days; today, all 50 states celebrate Arbor Day although the dates may vary in keeping with the local climate; and

WHEREAS, At the federal level, in 1970, President Richard Nixon proclaimed the last Friday in April as National Arbor Day; and

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is also now celebrated in other countries including Australia; variations are celebrated, including: "Greening Week" of Japan, "The New Year's Days of Trees" in Israel, "The Tree-Loving Week" of Korea, "The Reforestation Week" of Yugoslavia, "The Students' Afforestation Day" of Iceland and "The National Festival of Tree Planting" in India; and

WHEREAS, There is a benefit to having a host of healthy trees in our State; in 50 years, one tree recycles more than $37,000 worth of water, provides $31,000 worth of erosion control, $62,000 worth of air pollution control, and produces $37,000 worth of oxygen; and well placed trees help cut energy costs and consumption by decreasing air conditioning costs 10-50% and reducing heating costs as much as 4-22%; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, trees increase property values by 5 to 20% due to their landscaping value; trees are good noise barriers, making cities and neighborhoods quieter places to live; trees enhance the aesthetics of our environment; trees help prevent city flooding by catching raindrops and offsetting runoff caused by buildings and parking lots; and trees provide privacy, highlight views or screen them, and reduce glare; and

WHEREAS, According to a Chinese proverb: "One generation plants the trees under whose shade future generations rest"; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is now moved to commemorate the observance of Arbor Day and to acknowledge the efforts of citizens who plant and care for trees and woodlands in their neighborhoods; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate April 28, 2023, as Arbor Day in the State of New York.