

BY: Senator ORTT

COMMEMORATING the 300th Anniversary of Old Fort
Niagara

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commemorate historic landmarks within the State of New York that contribute to the cultural richness, educational advancement, and tourism economy of the region; and

WHEREAS, Located in Youngstown, New York, where the Niagara River meets Lake Ontario, Old Fort Niagara, which is a designated National Historic Landmark, is both the oldest continually occupied military site in North America and home to the oldest building on the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, The French Castle at Old Fort Niagara was built by the French in 1726; the historic site's 300th Anniversary will be celebrated by a series of exciting special programs and events; this momentous occasion coincides with the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States in 1776; on August 1, 2026, the Fort will host Niagara County's USA 250th Celebration; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the Fort's usual annual events, including large-scale reenactments, educational programs, and living history activities, the historic site will offer special French Castle 300 commemorations, including a history symposium, featuring well-known experts on the early 18th-century New York frontier, and the recreation of the arrival of French military engineer, Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros DeLúry, and his artisans and workers who built the French Castle; and

WHEREAS, The French Castle is the oldest building in the Great Lakes Basin; the French arrived at the mouth of the Niagara River on June 8, 1726, and began construction of a large stone house that would serve as a military fort, trading post, chapel, and meeting place between Europeans and Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Garrisoned over the years by French, British, and American soldiers, the building was restored during the 1920s, and today, owned and operated by the Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., it stands as a popular destination for thousands of visitors annually; and

WHEREAS, In addition to six original 18th-century buildings to explore, including the French Castle, Old Fort Niagara boasts an extensive collection of artifacts and exhibits that highlight the history and archeological aspects of the Fort, including underground rifle galleries, guardhouses, storehouses, and powder magazines; and

WHEREAS, Now in its 300th year, the French Castle has undergone many changes over the years; the Castle experienced threats of demolition, periodic withdrawals of garrisons, and constant pounding by the waves of Lake Ontario; the building endured cycles of neglect and repair, serving as housing, storage, barracks, and offices; although preservation

continues in this century, restoration of the Castle was essentially complete by 1933, and the entire Fort was dedicated as a public museum in 1934; and

WHEREAS, The 300th Anniversary of Old Fort Niagara celebrates its role in the rich history of the Great Lakes region and its designation as a National Historic Landmark, inviting visitors from around the world to witness its glory and unmatched beautiful uniqueness and importance to the Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of Old Fort Niagara and celebrate its lasting contributions to public history, education, conservation, and tourism in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc.