Assembly Resolution No. 77

BY: M. of A. Williams

RECOGNIZING February 2, 2025, as World Wetlands Day

WHEREAS, New York State understands the importance of preserving and contributing to the maintenance of wetlands, and understands the importance that they play in the cycle of preserving a proper balance in the ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to recognize Sunday, February 2, 2025, as World Wetlands Day; and

WHEREAS, Wetlands are land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally; and

WHEREAS, Inland wetlands include marshes, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains, and swamps; coastal wetlands include saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and even coral reefs; fishponds, rice paddies, and salt pans are human-made wetlands; and

WHEREAS, Wetlands are critical to human and planet life; directly or indirectly, they provide almost all of the world's consumption of freshwater; more than one billion people depend on them for a living and 40% of the world's species live and breed in wetlands; and

WHEREAS, Wetlands are a vital source for food, raw materials, genetic resources for medicines, and hydropower; they mitigate floods, protect coastlines and build community resilience to disasters, and they play an important role in transport, tourism and the cultural and spiritual well-being of people; and

WHEREAS, February 2, each year is World Wetlands Day to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet; this day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea; and

WHEREAS, Climate change is one of the most pressing problems facing humanity and our planet; this year's theme, "Wetlands Restoration", highlights the urgent need to prioritize wetland restoration; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 35% of the world's wetlands were lost between 1970-2015 with annual rates of loss accelerating from 2000; and

WHEREAS, Losses have been driven by megatrends such as climate change, population increase, urbanization, particularly of coastal zones and river deltas, and changing consumption patterns that have all fueled changes to land and water use and to agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Wetlands, which include lakes, rivers, marshes and peatlands as well as coastal and marine areas such as estuaries,

lagoons, mangroves and coral reefs, are currently estimated to cover more than 12.1 million km2, an area greater than the country of Greenland; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, Hurricane Sandy slammed into the eastern seaboard of the United States, directly impacting New York State and inflicting damage in 24 states; if not for coastal wetlands, the destruction would have been worse; and

WHEREAS, A recent study found that coastal wetlands in the Northeast United States prevented $625 million in direct flood damages during Hurricane Sandy, reducing damages by more than 22% in half of the impacted areas and by as much as 30% elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, The intensity, frequency, and duration of North Atlantic hurricanes have increased since the early 1980s, making the protection of the 50% of United States wetlands that remain an imperative; and

WHEREAS, New York State understands the importance of preserving and contributing to the maintenance of wetlands, and understands the importance that wetlands play in the cycle of preserving a proper balance in the ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to observe those events of true purpose and worthy accomplishment that recognize the need for the understanding of preserving the wetlands of New York and the global community, and instilling educational tenets to our Great State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to recognize February 2, 2025, as World Wetlands Day; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to World Wetlands Day events throughout the State of New York.