

Assembly Resolution No. 1051

BY: M. of A. Gunther

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, America's greatest conservation story

WHEREAS, More than a century ago, hunters, anglers and trappers were among the first conservationists who realized America's natural resources were in peril and could not sustain unregulated harvest and habitat destruction; and

WHEREAS, Hunters, anglers and trappers took it upon themselves to support laws that stopped excessive harvesting of fish and wildlife; established game and fish agencies to protect fish, wildlife and their habitat; and supported special fishing and hunting license fees to help fund the new agencies' efforts to provide for healthy natural resources for future generations; and

WHEREAS, The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program began 75 years ago with the passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in 1937; it was then bolstered with the passage of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act in 1950, (further expanded with the Wallop-Breaux amendment to the Sport Fish Restoration Act in 1984); and

WHEREAS, The combined contribution of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program to state fish and wildlife agencies has increased significantly since 1939; this exceeds more than any other single conservation effort in American history, adding numerous benefits to the New York State economy; and

WHEREAS, Each year, more than one million anglers take to New York's waters in the hope of catching one or more of the state's wide diversity of fish species; among the fish species found are trout, salmon, largemouth and smallmouth bass, pike, walleye, muskellunge, catfish, panfish, striped bass, bluefish, scup, black seabass, flounder and weakfish; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, numerous species, including the wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, wood duck, beaver, black bear, giant Canada goose, American elk, desert bighorn sheep, bobcat, mountain lion, and several species of predatory birds, have rebuilt their populations and extended their ranges far beyond what they were in the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, A major source of funding for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration; the wildlife portion, known as the Pittman-Robertson Act (named after the congressional sponsors of this federal legislation), provides funding for Wildlife Conservation and Sportsman Education; and

WHEREAS, The fisheries portion, known as the Dingle-Johnson or Wallop-Breaux Acts, provides funding for fisheries management and boating access; and

WHEREAS, The following New York State programs are funded by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program: Sport Fishery Management, Aquatic Education, Sport Fishery Research, Fishing and Boating Access, Freshwater Habitat Protection, and Marine Habitat Protection; and

WHEREAS, The cooperative partnership between industry, hunters, anglers, trappers, boaters, recreational shooters, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state natural resource agencies has resulted in one of the most successful model of fish and wildlife management in the world, restoring populations from coast to coast, Alaska and Hawaii; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, America's greatest conservation story; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.