

2013-K944

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the founding of Watkins Glen International

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in the State of New York has been greatly enhanced by the presence of certain extraordinary recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concerns, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the founding of Watkins Glen International; and

WHEREAS, On October 2, 1948, Watkins Glen International's incredible history began with its inaugural race, "The Day They Stopped the Trains"; this fulfilled founder, Cameron Argetsinger's dream of bringing European style competition to the village where he spent his summer vacations; and

WHEREAS, This event was the first road race in the United States after World War II, and laid the foundation for one of the country's premier racing facilities; and

WHEREAS, For five years, the top names in American sports car racing visited The Glen and huge crowds came out to watch them race; after using a temporary track, a new 2.3-mile permanent circuit was built in 1956; the following year, The Glen hosted its first professional race, a NASCAR event, won by Buck Baker over Fireball Roberts; and

WHEREAS, True international competition began in 1958, with the running of a Formula Libre race; in 1961, the stars of Formula 1 were all present for the Inaugural Watkins Glen U.S. Grand Prix, which would become a fall tradition at the circuit through 1980; Innes Ireland won the inaugural running, with great drivers such as Clark, Hill, Stewart, Lauda, Fittipaldi and Hunt among the winners of later Grand Prix; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, NASCAR returned to Watkins Glen International with the NASCAR Winston Cup series, featuring Tim Richmond's triumphant return; and

WHEREAS, This event, now called the NASCAR Sprint Cup series, has returned to The Glen on the same weekend for the past 22 years, and has featured some of the biggest names in auto racing; this annual competition has grown to become the largest weekend sporting event in New York State; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, International Speedway Corporation became sole owner of the historic road course, purchasing the remaining interests of Major benefactor, Corning Incorporated; this sale completed Corning's mission of refurbishing the facility while revitalizing the Southern Finger Lakes Region; and

WHEREAS, Watkins Glen International has undergone many changes over the years; the addition of the Inner Loop has increased the length of the long course to 3.4 miles and the short course to 2.45 miles; in 2005, The Glen underwent many major capital improvements; these new turns have enhanced competition while adding quality spectator viewing for racing fans; and

WHEREAS, The Glen cemented its distinction as North America's fastest road course when Davy Jones won the pole for the Camel Continental IX with a fast lap of 150.334 mph on the reconfigured 2.45 mile short course; and

WHEREAS, Today, this remarkable institution continues to hold many popular events including The Sahlen's Six Hour IMSA sports car race, the SCCA National Competition, the Cheez-It 355 at The Glen NASCAR race in August, Glenora Wine Cellars US Vintage Grand Prix, and the Ferrari Challenge; and

WHEREAS, More than 150 days of BMW, Porsche, Ferrari, Audi, Mazda and various other club event days from all over the eastern seaboard are presented each year; and

WHEREAS, As a world-renowned premier racing venue, Watkins Glen International brings over \$200 million in annual economic activity to the Southern Finger Lakes region, including the creation of thousands of jobs from track operation and maintenance on site, to lodging, dining, shopping and entertainment spending by its fans; and

WHEREAS, The Glen's contributions to its community go beyond motorsports; it proudly hosts the Finger Lakes Beer Festival, as well as the Finger Lakes Wine Festival, now in its 18th year, which provides a unique opportunity for people to enjoy products by New York wineries from every corner of the State; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its 65 year history, Watkins Glen International has embodied more than giant crowds and great speed; the racing community continues to return year after year to witness its historic moments and unique charms that have made this place one of the premier motorsports facilities in the world; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and take note of certain celebrated recreational institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this State that it strives to serve; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the founding of Watkins Glen International; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Watkins Glen International.