

2023-J2463

Senate Resolution No. 2463

BY: Senator MAY

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim
May 22, 2024, as International Day for Biological
Diversity in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize
official days that are set aside to increase awareness of serious
environmental issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York
State; and

WHEREAS, Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is a measure of the
variation of genetics and species in a particular habitat or ecosystem;
it commonly refers to the overall variety of life in an area; this
variety of life includes animals, plants, fungi and even microorganisms
that make up our natural world; each of these works together in
ecosystems to maintain balance and to support life; and

WHEREAS, Currently, the planet is facing an unprecedented
biodiversity crisis, largely driven by human activity; recent scientific
studies have confirmed human-driven activities are significantly
damaging the Earth's ecosystems by: altering 75 percent of the area of
terrestrial environments and 66 percent of marine environments; directly
exploiting wildlife and plant species; accelerating climate change,
directly harming nature and exacerbating other threats; polluting air,
land, and water; and introducing invasive species; and

WHEREAS, These studies have shown that human-driven threats have harmed biodiversity by: threatening approximately one million species with extinction now and in the coming decades, including over 40 percent of amphibians; 33 percent of corals, sharks, shark relatives, and marine mammals; over 60 percent of cycads and over 30 percent of conifer trees; and about 10 percent of over 5 million insect species; and

WHEREAS, In addition, human-driven threats have harmed biodiversity by causing population sizes of wild species to decline by: an average of 68 percent for mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles; nearly 3 billion birds in North America since 1970; about 50 percent for live corals; and an average of over 20 percent overall; and

WHEREAS, Human activity is accelerating the decline of important economic and cultural services, with: the productivity of nearly one-fourth of the land surface reduced; over one-third of land surface and 75 percent of freshwater resources devoted to crop or livestock production; about half a trillion dollars of global crops at risk from pollinator loss; one-third of marine fisheries overfished, 60 percent fished at capacity, and just 7 percent fished below capacity; and 25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions caused by land clearing, crops, and fertilization; and

WHEREAS, The decline of biodiversity disproportionately impacts indigenous and other communities that rely on nature for essential services, including Native Americans and Alaska Natives who offer unique perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge critical to preserving biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the decline of biodiversity and ecosystem services observed worldwide is occurring in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York possesses an abundance and great diversity of species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are of significant value for many intrinsic, aesthetic, ecological, educational, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific reasons; and

WHEREAS, The decline of biodiversity also presents a direct threat to the security, health, and well-being of the people of New York by causing economic harm through the loss of valuable ecosystem services such as: zoonotic disease buffering, pollination, water filtration, soil replenishment, the provision of game species, medicinal products, recreational opportunities, and others; additionally, biodiversity loss drives pandemic risk; and

WHEREAS, Federal agencies are tasked with protecting and conserving biodiversity in the United States and worldwide through a variety of legal and policy channels; and

WHEREAS, There is no coordinating policy to maximize the effectiveness of the Federal Government's conservation efforts and collaboration with the States, local governments, Tribes, private landowners, and other nongovernmental stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, Scientific research highlights essential pathways forward, including: establishing the effective conservation, restoration, and durable protection of an ecologically representative area of the State of New York and its lands, freshwaters, and oceans by 2030 by working collaboratively with governments, land owners, fishers, indigenous peoples, communities, and others; restoring or rewilding species, degraded habitats, and ensuring integrity and connectivity of protected areas; retaining and protecting highly intact ecosystems; reducing pesticide use to levels no higher than needed for sustainable,

ecologically, and safe food production; and addressing the threats posed by invasive species; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York should play a leading role in addressing the biodiversity crisis, and more must be done to increase activity at the local, state, and national levels; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim May 22, 2024, as International Day for Biological Diversity in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York.