

**A PROCLAMATION TO BE SUBMITTED
BY LEGISLATOR MARINELLI**

RE: Supporting State Investment in Niagara Falls Reservation State Park to Enable the Maid of the Mist to Continue Operating from the U.S. Side of the Falls

WHEREAS, *Travel and Leisure Magazine* has named Niagara Falls the No. 5 Top World Destination; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that Niagara Falls is the No. 1 one tourist destination in our region, the former Buffalo Convention & Visitors Bureau was renamed the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau some years ago and is now called Visit Buffalo Niagara to tie Buffalo's highly acclaimed architectural, cultural and heritage attractions to the No. 1 draw for tourism in Western New York; and

WHEREAS, Visit Buffalo Niagara is funded by bed tax revenues that are part of the Erie County Budget, and tourists to our region often stay in hotels located in Erie County as the "hub" and "spoke" their visits to Niagara Falls and other attractions in Niagara County, as well as visiting Erie County's arts, heritage and cultural sites; and

WHEREAS, the Maid of the Mist sightseeing boat ride is a major attraction for visitors to Niagara Falls, and has been in continuous operation since the mid-1800s; and

WHEREAS, no other attraction provides the unique vantage point for the American, Bridal Veil and Horseshoe Falls that is offered by the Maid of the Mist sightseeing boats, to wit, a view of the Falls and the feel of the mist from below the cataract; and

WHEREAS, the Maid of the Mist has maintained a price point that is affordable for the vast majority of visitors to Niagara Falls, enabling families to purchase tickets to not only a sightseeing cruise but to other amenities the Buffalo Niagara region has to offer, including the Buffalo Zoo – home to Luna, our famous polar bear cub; and

WHEREAS, the company that won the right to operate luxury cruises on the Canadian side of the Falls – where boat storage facilities for the Maid of the Mist have been located – will not allow the Maid of the Mist to store its boats there any longer; and

WHEREAS, this development prompted New York State to initiate \$32 million in capital improvements to the American side of the Falls and its attractions, with a driving reason being the need for a winter storage facility for the Maid of the Mist boats; and

WHEREAS, the capital project is projected to create 100 temporary construction jobs and support 150 full-time and seasonal jobs associated with the Maid of the Mist, so important to our economy and tax base in Western New York; and

WHEREAS, the capital improvements to Niagara Falls Reservation State Park will go well beyond enabling the Maid of the Mist to continue its reasonably priced, family-friendly

sightseeing boat rides, but will go further to improving the overall visitor experience in that section of the Park; and

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of this Legislative Body that the Niagara Preservation Group that is opposing the capital improvements is a brand new organization formed with the assistance of the company that will be in competition with the Maid of the Mist, and that a New York City PR firm has been engaged; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Buffalo Niagara region that the iconic Maid of the Mist sightseeing boat rides, the oldest scenic boat ride in the United States and recognized the world over for the quality of the visitor experience, be allowed to continue its operations from the U.S. side of Niagara Falls; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Legislature believes that a tourism attraction that draws 20 million people to the Canadian and American sides of Niagara Falls can accommodate two distinct boat cruises – the Canadian luxury option and the American family-friendly option that is affordable for most visitors to the Falls.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature convey its full support for New York State's investment in capital improvements to Niagara Falls Reservation State Park to enable the Maid of the Mist sightseeing boat rides to continue operating from the American side of Niagara Falls; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be conveyed to Governor Andrew Cuomo, the Western New York Delegation to the New York State Legislature and all others deemed necessary and proper.

FISCAL IMPACT: None for resolution.