



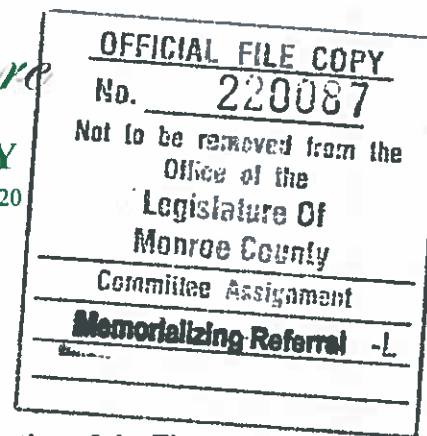
Monroe County Legislature

STEVE BREW
MAJORITY LEADER

ROBERT COLBY
LEGISLATOR – DISTRICT 20

March 7, 2022

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
Rochester, NY 14614



Re: Memorializing the Congress of the United States to Support the Designation of the Finger Lakes as a National Heritage Area

Honorable Legislators:

The Finger Lakes form a unique and diverse region in Upstate New York. All of them encompass a patchwork of cultures and history, as well as spectacular natural, scenic and recreational resources that reflect a unique contribution to the collective American identity. They are distinguished by eleven pristine lakes formed over 19,000 years ago at the end of the "Ice Age." Additionally, they hold Native American histories and landmarks, rich agricultural lands that inspired settlement, villages and small towns, a world-renowned wine industry, which have together have truly formed a unique and distinctive landscape.

The Congress of the United States has the authority to designate National Heritage Areas. For consideration, an area must encompass a region where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape shaped by geography and cultural traditions. A Finger Lakes National Heritage Area Feasibility Study was authorized by the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to evaluate the natural, historic, cultural, educational, and recreational resources of the Finger Lakes.

Legislation identified the following counties to be considered as part of the study: Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates. Monroe County is within the Finger Lakes Tourism Region, as designated by New York State law and the National Heritage Area study area. It has a plethora of natural, cultural, historic, agricultural and recreational resources pertinent to the study.

The Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance, founded in 1919, has worked since 2014 with regional and area civic organizations, local jurisdictions and local governments, business community and numerous other stakeholders and non-profit groups in submitting the original request to the National Park Service. This resulted in the Feasibility Study funding in 2019 and they continue to work with the National Park Service to gather input from the public regarding the creation of a national heritage area in the Finger Lakes.

Monroe County supports the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area designation and the inclusion of all fourteen counties including Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates counties in the National Heritage Area. It also supports the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance in their current and future leadership role in administering the National Heritage Area. Therefore, we ask to join us in calling upon the United States Congress to designate the Finger Lakes Region as a National Heritage Area.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steve Brew
Monroe County Legislature
Majority Leader

Robert Colby
Monroe County Legislature
District 20