

Warren County Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 174 OF 2018

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SUPERVISORS STROUGH, LEGGETT, BRAYMER, WILD, MCDEVITT, DIAMOND, DICKINSON, GERAGHTY, MAGOWAN, SOKOL AND DRISCOLL

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE

WHEREAS, New York State forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there, and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

WHEREAS, the addition of over one million acres of DEC managed lands over the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from one (1) ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to one (1) ranger per 53,752 acres today, and

WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence, and

WHEREAS, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration, and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land, and

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WHEREAS, the current level of forest ranger staffing, one hundred thirty-five (135) statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to, and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people, and

WHEREAS, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Supervisors does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to one hundred seventy-five (175) rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors be, and hereby is, directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Elizabeth O’C. Little, Assemblyman Daniel G. Stec, the Intercounty Legislative Committee of the Adirondacks, the New York State Association of Counties and the Police Benevolent Association of New York State, Inc., 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany, New York 12207.