

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 83

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO

District 20 (Union)

SYNOPSIS

Designates May of each year as “Monarch Butterfly Month.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



- 1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating May of each year as “Monarch
2 Butterfly Month” in New Jersey.
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is an iconic
5 large orange and black butterfly that is one of the most familiar
6 butterflies in North America; and
- 7 **WHEREAS**, The annual migration of the monarch butterfly through
8 New Jersey is a much anticipated phenomenon, and one that holds
9 environmental, educational, and economic value to the State; and
- 10 **WHEREAS**, Every autumn, millions of monarch butterflies undertake a
11 spectacular multi-generational migration thousands of miles from
12 Canada and the northern United States to Mexico and California,
13 stopping along the way in places like New Jersey, to feed and
14 reproduce; and
- 15 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterfly populations in North America represent
16 the vast majority of all monarch butterflies in the world; and
- 17 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterflies can be found in any open habitat with
18 wildflowers, including meadows and marshes, and are easily
19 attracted to gardens with native plants such as milkweed, purple
20 coneflower, aster, and goldenrod; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterfly habitat has been drastically reduced and
22 degraded throughout the butterfly’s summer and winter ranges by
23 the decline of nectar sources, commercial development, logging,
24 and broader environmental changes; and
- 25 **WHEREAS**, Historically, the largest concentrations of monarch
26 butterflies have occurred in Cape May and other coastal areas,
27 where hundreds of monarch butterflies could be seen feeding on
28 seaside goldenrod, and roosting on eastern red cedar trees; and
- 29 **WHEREAS**, Tourists once flocked to Cape May to see the monarch
30 butterflies pass through the region on their grand journey to
31 Mexico, but in recent years, the spectacle many once enjoyed has
32 been reduced to a fraction of what it once was, and the tourism it
33 brought to the area has fallen with it; and
- 34 **WHEREAS**, One of the major reasons for monarch butterfly population
35 decline is the increased use of pesticides that kill milkweed, the
36 monarch butterfly’s preferred plant host; and
- 37 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterflies are among the group of native
38 pollinators that aid in the successful reproduction of many key fruit
39 and vegetable crops across the State, and are crucial to New
40 Jersey’s agricultural and economic success; and
- 41 **WHEREAS**, Climate change also poses a dire threat to the monarch
42 butterfly, as several scientists have predicted that the monarch
43 butterfly’s overwintering habitat in Mexico may be rendered
44 unsuitable by global climate change, and that much of the monarch
45 butterfly’s summer range may also become unsuitable due to
46 increasing temperatures; and
- 47 **WHEREAS**, Disease and predation also contribute to population
48 declines, and major threats facing the monarch butterfly include

1 numerous pathogens, such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoan
2 parasites; and

3 **WHEREAS**, The monarch butterfly population has declined by more
4 than 90 percent in the past two decades, and is presently near the
5 lowest population ever recorded; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Although there are small populations of monarch
7 butterflies throughout the world, the North American monarch
8 butterfly population is significant because without it, the
9 redundancy, resiliency, and representation of the species would be
10 so impaired that the monarch butterfly would become increasingly
11 vulnerable to extinction; and

12 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has long supported the preservation of the
13 monarch butterfly, and in 2017, passed two separate pieces of
14 legislation helping to protect the species: the “Adopt a Monarch
15 Butterfly Waystation Act,” P.L.2017, c.250 (C.13:1B-15.162 et
16 seq.), and the “Milkweed for Monarchs Act,” P.L.2017, c.252
17 (C.13:1B-15.170 et seq.); and

18 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey values the important role that pollinators,
19 such as the monarch butterfly, play in the ecology of the State
20 and the nation, and there is bi-partisan support in New Jersey for
21 programs and legislation that protect and encourage pollinators
22 and the habitats that support them; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Monarch butterflies arrive in New Jersey as early as
24 mid-April and can be seen throughout the summer and fall
25 months, which makes May a particularly good month to promote
26 this remarkable insect; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Designating May as “Monarch Butterfly Month” in New
28 Jersey will help to raise the profile of the monarch butterfly and the
29 critical programs being implemented to ensure its preservation;
30 now, therefore,

31

32 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
33 *State of New Jersey:*

34

35 1. The month of May of each year is designated as “Monarch
36 Butterfly Month” in order to encourage public officials, businesses,
37 schools, and the residents of this State to undertake efforts to
38 protect and preserve the monarch butterfly and its natural habitat.

39

40 2. The Governor, the Commissioner of Environmental
41 Protection, and the Secretary of Agriculture are respectfully
42 requested to annually issue proclamations recognizing May of each
43 year as “Monarch Butterfly Month” and calling upon public
44 officials and residents of the State to observe “Monarch Butterfly
45 Month” with appropriate programs and activities.

46

47 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution would designate May of each year as “Monarch Butterfly Month” to encourage public officials, businesses, schools, and the residents of this State to undertake efforts to protect and preserve the monarch butterfly and its natural habitat.

The monarch butterfly is an iconic large orange and black butterfly that is one of the most familiar butterflies in North America. Every autumn, millions of monarch butterflies undertake a spectacular multi-generational migration thousands of miles from Canada and the northern United States to Mexico and California, stopping along the way in places like New Jersey, to feed and reproduce. Monarch butterfly populations in North America represent the vast majority of all monarch butterflies in the world; however, its habitat has been drastically reduced and degraded by the decline of nectar sources, commercial development, logging, and broader environmental changes.

One of the major reasons for monarch butterfly population decline is the increased use of pesticides that kill milkweed, the monarch butterfly’s preferred plant host. Climate change also poses a dire threat to the monarch butterfly, as several scientists have predicted that the monarch butterfly’s overwintering habitat in Mexico may be rendered unsuitable by global climate change, and that much of the monarch butterfly’s summer range may also become unsuitable due to increasing temperatures. Disease and predation also contribute to population declines, and major threats facing the monarch butterfly include numerous pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoan parasites. The monarch butterfly population has declined by more than 90 percent in the past two decades, and is presently near the lowest population ever recorded.

The annual migration of the monarch butterfly through New Jersey is a much anticipated phenomenon, and one that holds environmental, educational, and economic value to the State. Historically, the largest concentrations of monarch butterflies have occurred in Cape May and other coastal areas, where hundreds of monarch butterflies could be seen feeding on seaside goldenrod, and roosting on eastern red cedar trees. Tourists once flocked to Cape May to see the monarch butterflies pass through the region on their grand journey to Mexico, but in recent years, the spectacle many once enjoyed has been reduced to a fraction of what it once was, and the tourism it brought to the area has fallen with it.

New Jersey has long supported the preservation of the monarch butterfly, and in 2017, passed two separate pieces of legislation helping to protect the species: the “Adopt a Monarch Butterfly Waystation Act” and the “Milkweed for Monarchs Act.” New Jersey values the important role that pollinators, such as the monarch butterfly, play in the ecology of the State and the nation,

1 and there is bi-partisan support in New Jersey for programs and
2 legislation that protect and encourage pollinators and the habitats
3 that support them.

4 Monarch butterflies arrive in New Jersey as early as mid-April
5 and can be seen throughout the summer and fall months, which
6 makes May a particularly good month to promote this remarkable
7 insect. Designating May as “Monarch Butterfly Month” in New
8 Jersey will help to raise the profile of the monarch butterfly and the
9 critical programs being implemented to ensure its preservation.