

SCHUMER, CLINTON, HINCHEY INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH HUDSON-FULTON- CHAMPLAIN COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

Bill Will Commemorate Hudson River and Lake Champlain Milestones

Washington, DC - Charles E. Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton and Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-22-NY) announced that they had introduced legislation to establish a Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Commemoration Commission to promote national observance of the voyages of Henry Hudson, Robert Fulton and Samuel de Champlain in 2009.

The "Hudson-Fulton-Champlain 400th Commemoration Commission Act of 2003", which is similar to legislation that was introduced in the last Congress, was introduced into the Senate yesterday. The House version was introduced on Thursday. Congressmen John McHugh (R-NY-23), Eliot Engel (D-NY-17), Michael McNulty (D-NY-21), James Walsh (R-NY-25), Bernard Sanders (I-VT-At Large), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY-08), and Major Owens (D-NY-11) are original cosponsors of the House bill.

The year 2009 will mark 400th anniversary of the voyage of Henry Hudson, the first European to sail up the Hudson River; the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Samuel de Champlain, the first European to discover and explore Lake Champlain; and the 200th anniversary of the voyage of Robert Fulton, the first person to use steam navigation on a commercial basis.

"Let's start planning now to make this anniversary the grand celebration it ought to be," Senator Schumer said. "The stories of the historic voyages of Hudson, Fulton and Champlain are treasures of our nation's history and could attract visitors from all over the country to New York. The early explorers opened up a

crucial part of North America to international trade throughout eastern New York, the North Country, and along Lake Champlain. Now we can celebrate that special history."

"The Hudson-Fulton-Champlain 400th Commemoration Commission represents a unique opportunity to celebrate New York and America's glorious past but it is also an opportunity to bring visitors to New York as they learn about our history and our heritage" Senator Clinton said. "The 400th Commemoration Commission will facilitate Hudson-Fulton-Champlain-related activities throughout New York and the United States. With a focus on heritage tourism and appropriate economic development, the Commission will ensure that we provide a first-class visitor experience as well as a lasting legacy and long-term public benefit to the communities involved".

"So much of the history of New York, and indeed of the history of the United States, stems from these three events," said Hinchey. "The early settlements that resulted from the explorations of Hudson and Champlain had a lasting influence on our history, culture, law, commerce, and traditions of liberty. The maiden voyage of Fulton's Clermont revolutionized waterborne commerce, transformed naval warfare, and fostered international relations by facilitating trade and travel across the oceans. This bill will allow us to commemorate these important milestones appropriately."

In 2002 New York State enacted legislation creating a state commemoration commission. The federal Hudson-Fulton-Champlain 400th Commemoration Commission will be established to coordinate educational, cultural and historical projects while cooperating and assisting the programs and activities conceived by New York, New Jersey and Vermont. The Commission will also be responsible for facilitating nation-wide and international celebration efforts. It is also hoped that the Commission will

support and facilitate marketing efforts for a commemorative coin, commemorative stamp and other related activities.

The first European exploration of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain, and the introduction of steam navigation to maritime commerce are celebrated both in the United States and abroad. In 1909, Americans celebrated the 300th anniversaries of these events with maritime celebrations and art exhibitions. The Dutch built the first replica of Hudson's ship, the Half Moon, and sent it up the Hudson River for the observance. Congress recognized the 350th anniversary by establishing a similar commission to coordinate federal participation in the 1959 celebrations.