

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today helped the House pass a resolution, H.Con.Res. 178, celebrating the U.S.-Netherlands relationship and this year's quadricentennial celebration of Henry Hudson's exploration and discovery of the river in New York that now bears his name. Hinchey traveled to the Netherlands in March to join Her Royal Highness Queen Beatrix for a kickoff of that country's quadricentennial celebration. Earlier this month, Her Royal Highness Queen Beatrix honored Hinchey with the Dutch Royal Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau Medal for the congressman's work to commemorate the quadricentennial anniversary and for his efforts to strengthen the U.S.-Netherlands relationship.

"As we celebrate 400 years of shared history with the Netherlands, it is only appropriate that we in the Congress formally acknowledge and praise the important contributions that the Dutch made to the establishment of New Amsterdam, which is now known as New York," said Hinchey, who spoke out in favor of the resolution on the House floor today. "Here in New York, we've been celebrating the quadricentennial through a series of wonderful events that have helped this current generation of New Yorkers gain a much better understanding of the history of our state and its ties to the Netherlands."

Hinchey traveled to Amsterdam in March to join Her Royal Highness Queen Beatrix for a kickoff of the Netherlands' quadricentennial celebration of Henry Hudson's journey. The congressman initiated the federal effort to organize this year's celebrations in New York of Hudson's historic voyage as well as the quadricentennial anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's exploration of the lake that now bears his name and the bicentennial celebration of Robert Fulton's invention of the steamboat in New York. In addition to meeting with the queen, Hinchey had a full agenda during his four day trip to the Netherlands that included meetings with various political leaders to discuss U.S.-Netherlands partnerships on renewable energy and economic matters.

The Order of Orange-Nassau Medal that Hinchey received from Her Royal Highness Queen Beatrix is awarded to people who she believes deserve appreciation and recognition from society for the special way in which they have carried out their activities with great character. The royal medal is also awarded to those who have reached special achievements in his/her work. Such 'outstanding or exceptional services in the working environment' must exceed what might normally be expected of a person in that position. The royal medal is one of The Netherlands' highest civil honors.

The congressman, who has a long public record of supporting historic preservation and advancing programs that help inform the public about New York's rich history, has long been

interested in the story of Henry Hudson's voyage up the now-Hudson River in 1609 and the subsequent development of New York by the Dutch. The settlement of the Dutch in New York and subsequently in Fort Orange outside of Albany led to the city becoming the most important travel region in the newly developed America and the Hudson Valley becoming a key region of the new land. The importance of the river increased over time and led to the development of the Erie Canal, which enabled a growing population to move further west. The development of the canal also made New York City the most significant city on the east coast, settling what had been a two-way competition between Boston and Philadelphia for that status. The establishment of New York as a trading post also made the city a center for international trade.