

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 156

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:

Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Designates July 10 of each year as “Lake Denmark Disaster Remembrance Day” in NJ.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating July 10 of each year as “Lake
2 Denmark Disaster Remembrance Day” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, The Picatinny Arsenal, located in Morris County, was
5 originally established in 1880, and by 1911, it became a major site
6 for gunpowder and munitions manufacturing as well as research
7 and development work; and
8 **WHEREAS**, On the arsenal was the Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition
9 Depot, which by the 1920s became overstocked with ammunition
10 left unused during the First World War; and
11 **WHEREAS**, On Saturday, July 10, 1926 at approximately 5:15 p.m.,
12 lightning struck one of the above-ground temporary magazines,
13 causing a fire that triggered the detonation of over 660,000 pounds
14 of explosives and started a massive chain reaction that consumed
15 millions of pounds of explosives across the arsenal in the following
16 days; and
17 **WHEREAS**, The enormity of the explosions was such that the ground
18 shook and glass shattered in Rockaway Borough, residents reported
19 embers and ash fifteen miles away in Passaic County, and debris
20 could be found over 20 miles away; and
21 **WHEREAS**, These explosions killed 19 individuals attempting to quell
22 the fires, including 12 Marines, four sailors, one soldier, and two
23 civilians, and injured about another 50 people; and
24 **WHEREAS**, The blasts caused the complete and total annihilation of
25 structures within a radius of approximately 2,700 feet and damaged
26 buildings up to 8,700 feet away, destroying 187 of 200 buildings at
27 the depot and resulting in damage that would be worth more than
28 \$700 million today; and
29 **WHEREAS**, Investigations by the Army and Navy revealed that the
30 storage of unused ammunition in the magazines surpassed
31 reasonable limits and the initial explosion was due to an excess of
32 1.6 million pounds of trinitrotoluene, also known as TNT, stored in
33 a single building; and
34 **WHEREAS**, The catastrophe at the Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition
35 Depot led to the establishment of the Armed Forces Explosives
36 Safety Board as well as a new set of standards concerning the
37 design of ammunition depots and storage safety requirements for all
38 arsenals across the nation; and
39 **WHEREAS**, While the tragic disaster that claimed the lives of those
40 bravely serving their country continues to be one of the worst in
41 New Jersey history, it became an impetus for significant safety
42 reforms in the Armed Forces; and
43 **WHEREAS**, In July 2026, the Army signaled its enduring commitment
44 to protecting its workforce through continuous improvements in
45 safety, risk management, and operational excellence during its
46 100th anniversary commemoration of the 1926 explosion at the
47 Picatinny Arsenal; and

1 **WHEREAS**, It is altogether fitting and proper for the people of New
 2 Jersey to mark the 100th anniversary of the Lake Denmark Naval
 3 Ammunition Depot disaster by honoring those who perished and
 4 recognizing the paramount importance of workplace safety; now,
 5 therefore,

6
 7 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
 8 *State of New Jersey:*
 9

10 1. July 10 of each year shall be designated as “Lake Denmark
 11 Disaster Remembrance Day” in the State of New Jersey, in
 12 recognition of its significance to New Jersey history and its impact
 13 on modern workplace safety standards established by the Armed
 14 Forces.
 15

16 2. The Governor is respectfully requested to annually issue a
 17 proclamation calling upon public officials and citizens of this State
 18 to observe “Lake Denmark Disaster Remembrance Day” with
 19 appropriate activities and programs.
 20

21 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.
 22
 23

24 STATEMENT
 25

26 This joint resolution designates July 10 of each year as “Lake
 27 Denmark Disaster Remembrance Day” in New Jersey (NJ).

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 29 established in 1880, and by 1911, it became a major site for
 30 gunpowder and munitions manufacturing as well as research and
 31 development work. On the arsenal was the Lake Denmark Naval
 32 Ammunition Depot, which by the 1920s became overstocked with
 33 ammunition left unused during the First World War.

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 35 one of the above-ground temporary magazines, causing a fire that
 36 triggered the detonation of over 660,000 pounds of explosives and
 37 starting a massive chain reaction that consumed millions of pounds
 38 of explosives across the arsenal in the following days. The
 39 enormity of the explosions was such that the ground shook and
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 43 attempting to quell the fires, including 12 Marines, four sailors, one
 44 soldier, and two civilians, and injured about another 50 people. The
 45 blasts caused the complete and total annihilation of structures
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2 million today.

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4 unused ammunition in the magazines surpassed reasonable limits
5 and the initial explosion was due to an excess of 1.6 million pounds
6 of trinitrotoluene, also known as TNT, stored in a single building.
7 The catastrophe at the Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition Depot led
8 to the establishment of the Armed Forces Explosives Safety Board
9 as well as a new set of standards concerning the design of
10 ammunition depots and storage safety requirements for all arsenals
11 across the nation.

12 While the tragic disaster that claimed the lives of those bravely
13 serving the country continues to be one of the worst in New Jersey
14 history, it became an impetus for significant safety reforms in the
15 Armed Forces. In July 2026, the Army signaled its enduring
16 commitment to protecting its workforce through continuous
17 improvements in safety, risk management, and operational
18 excellence during its 100th anniversary commemoration of the 1926
19 explosion at the Picatinny Arsenal.