



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: R2011-14
Type: Resolution
File created: 1/13/2011
Status: Adopted
In control: City Council
Final action: 4/13/2011
Title: Call for hearing(s) on levels and dangers of hexavalent chromium in Chicago tap water
Sponsors: Burke, Edward M., Rugai, Virginia
Indexes: Committee on Energy, Environmental Protection & Public Utilities
Attachments: 1. R2011-14.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/13/2011	1	City Council	Adopted	Pass
2/24/2011	1	Committee on Energy, Environmental Protection and Public Utilities	Recommended to Pass	Pass
1/13/2011	1	City Council	Referred	

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, recent media reports have indicated that hexavalent chromium, also known as chromium 6, has been detected in tap water in cities across the United States; and
WHEREAS, this dangerous toxin, hexavalent chromium (chromium 6), first made headlines in the mid-1990's when law clerk, Erin Brockovich, uncovered that Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) had been poisoning the small town of Hinkley, California with hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) for over 30 years; and
WHEREAS, the cancer-stricken residents of Hinkley, California received a \$333 million dollar settlement from PG&E for injuries resulting from the contamination of their water supply; and
WHEREAS, hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) is commonly discharged from steel and pulp mills, as from well as metal-planting and leather-tanning facilities; and
WHEREAS, studies of workers in chromium processing factories have shown that hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) is a known human carcinogen; and
WHEREAS, chronic exposure to hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) in tap water is likely to raise one's risk of cancer; and
WHEREAS, the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a Washington-based research and advocacy organization, recently hired an independent laboratory which found hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) in treated drinking water from 31 cities; and
WHEREAS, at least 74 million Americans in nearly 7,000 communities across 42 states are reportedly exposed to chromium polluted tap water; and
WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not require cities to test for the toxic metal, nor does the EPA limit the amount of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) permitted in drinking water; and
WHEREAS, the EPA hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) as a human carcinogen when consumed in drinking water; and
WHEREAS, in 2009, California officials proposed limiting the amount of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) in drinking water to 0.06 parts per billion (ppb); and
WHEREAS, 0.18 parts per billion of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) were found in Lake Michigan water,

which is pumped to seven (7) million people in the Chicago area; and
WHEREAS, the U.S. Steel and Arcelor Mittal mills reportedly dumped a combined 3,100 pounds of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) into Lake Michigan and its tributaries, less than 9 miles away from one of the City of Chicago's water-intake crib located off of 68th Street; and
WHEREAS, the Chicago Department of Water Management is responsible for delivering close to one (1) billion gallons of fresh pure water to the residents of the City of Chicago and 125 suburban communities each day; and
WHEREAS, the cities of Norman, Oklahoma; Honolulu, Hawaii; Riverside, California; Madison, Wisconsin; and San Jose, California have the highest levels of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) according the EWG; and
WHEREAS, U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer have urged the EPA to provide information on its efforts to keep hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) out of drinking water; and
WHEREAS, given the known potential risks associated with hexavalent chromium (chromium 6), the City of Chicago must institute a policy to protect the millions of people who drink Lake Michigan water; NOW, THEREFORE,
BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Chicago's Department of Water Management, under the direction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, shall begin routine testing to assess the exposure of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) in Chicago's Lake Michigan and shall report to the City Council their plans to implement hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) limits; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chicago City Council hereby invites representatives from the Department of Water Management, the Department of Environment, and the Department of Health to appear before the Committee on Energy, Environmental Protection and Public Utilities to testify at a hearing concerning the levels of hexavalent chromium (chromium 6) found in Chicago tap-water and the dangers it poses to health of those drinking Lake Michigan tap-water. ,,