



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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Call for President Donald Trump and U.S. Congress to support mission of Environmental Protection Agency and maintain operation at Region 5 office in Chicago Committee on Health and Environmental Protection

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, On July 9, 1970, Republican President Richard M. Nixon sent a Special Message from the President to the Congress transmitting a reorganization plan to establish the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"). In President Nixon's words: "As concern with the condition of our physical environment has intensified, it has become increasingly clear that we need to know more about the total environment - land, water and air . . . This requires pulling together into one agency a variety of research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities now scattered through several departments and agencies. It also requires that the new agency be given sufficient support elements ... to give it the needed strength and potential for carrying out its mission."; and

WHEREAS, Established on December 2, 1970, the EPA was the product of growing concern about environmental degradation in the United States in the form of rivers so polluted they caught fire; entire towns built on sites so toxic that the only recourse was to abandon them; air pollution so thick in some cities that people changed their shirts twice a day; pollution-induced eutrophication and massive fish kills so pervasive that Lake Erie was pronounced "dead"; West Coast cities, such as Denver and Los Angeles, frequently veiled in thick, deadly smog; and entire ecosystems in the Northeastern United States destroyed by acid rain; and

WHEREAS, Since its founding almost fifty years ago, the EPA has made remarkable inroads into solving these problems and in fulfilling its mission to protect all Americans from significant risks to human health in the environment; to monitor our environment to reduce environmental risks; to ensure that environmental protection is taken into account when developing governmental policies; to ensure that all persons have access to accurate environment-related information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks; to ensure that our communities and ecosystems are diverse, sustainable and economically productive; and to enable the United States to exercise a strong leadership role when working with other nations to protect the global environment; and

WHEREAS, The vital role played by the EPA in protecting all Americans from environmental hazards was underscored last week, on April 11, 2017, when a failed pipe at a U.S. Steel plant in Portage, Indiana allowed wastewater containing the potentially carcinogenic chemical hexavalent chromium to enter Burns Waterway through a drainage pipe located about 100 yards from Lake Michigan, the second largest lake in the United States and the chief source of Chicago's water supply; and

WHEREAS, On April 18, 2017, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin sent a letter to

the executives of U.S. Steel, calling on them to keep their Portage, Indiana facility closed while water and soil testing continues in the Lake Michigan tributary; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after this frightening incident occurred, Chicago Sun Times columnist Michael Sneed reported that President's Trump's plan to dismantle the EPA's workforce may include closing the EPA's Region 5 branch office in Chicago and consolidating it with the Region 7 branch office in Lenexa, Kansas. President Trump's Budget Director, Mick Mulvaney, has publicly singled out the EPA as a particular target for budget cuts, indicating that the EPA was told to identify two of the EPA's ten regional offices for closure by June 15; and

WHEREAS, The possible closure of the EPA's Region 5 Office in Chicago is deeply concerning to all Chicagoans, particularly in light of the serious threat posed to Chicago's water supply last week as the result of a chemical spill in Indiana; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this nineteenth day of April, 2017, do hereby urge the President and Congress of the United States to reaffirm its commitment to supporting the vital mission of the EPA, and to keeping open the EPA Region 5 Office in Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to President Donald J. Trump and to the Illinois Delegation to the United States Congress as a sign of our dedication to and support of this important issue.