



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL  
November 14, 2018

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a resolution memorializing the life of Henry Henderson. Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Members of this Chamber were deeply saddened to learn of the death on November 5, 2018, at age 66, of Henry L. Henderson, Chicago's first Commissioner of the Department of Environment, and a nationally renowned advocate for cleaner air and water; and

WHEREAS, Born and raised in Granite City, Illinois, Mr. Henderson and his childhood friends discovered that the water seeping into the basements of their homes after a heavy rain was so badly polluted that it could be lit on fire. The indelible mark left by this experience culminated in Mr. Henderson's decision

later in life to pursue a career dedicated to protecting the environment and public health; and

WHEREAS, An energetic, intellectually curious and well-rounded young man, Mr. Henderson received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and theology from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, before heading to England to earn a master's degree in philosophy at Oxford University. In 1976, Mr. Henderson moved to Chicago, where he pursued a doctorate degree at the University of Chicago. Intrigued by the interplay between law and policy, Mr. Henderson enrolled in law school at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where he earned his juris doctor degree in 1982; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from law school, Mr. Henderson worked as an assistant attorney general for the State of Illinois focusing on environmental law before accepting a position with the City of Chicago Department of Law, where he continued to work on environmental issues; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Mayor Harold Washington named Mr. Henderson to head the City's Commission on Shoreline Protection; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, Mr. Henderson was appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley as Commissioner of the Department of Environment, the first city department of its kind in the Nation. Mr. Henderson's many accomplishments as Commissioner of Environment included launching the City's blue-bag recycling program; shutting down illegal garbage dumps; overseeing the Chicago Brownsfield Initiative to clean up abandoned industrial sites; leading the fight to preserve the North Park Village Nature Center; and creating Chicago Greencorps, a job-training program in underserved communities that turned vacant lots into community gardens and street medians into additional green space. Mr. Henderson's template for promoting a livable, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing environment in Chicago continues to this day to inspire other cities to function as good environmental role models; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, Mr. Henderson left the Department of Environment to join the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois as a senior fellow. In 2000, he founded his own firm, Policy Solutions Ltd. In 2007, Mr. Henderson was hired by the Natural Resources Defense Council ("NRDC"), an international New York-based environmental advocacy group, to open a

Midwest office. At NRDC, Mr. Henderson spent his time holding polluters accountable for their actions, addressing manganese pollution in Southeast Chicago, combatting contamination of the Great Lakes, and working tirelessly with private companies and governmental entities to improve air and water quality throughout the region. The transformative nature of Mr. Henderson's work in expanding the NRDC's mission in the Midwest was widely acknowledged and admired by his colleagues there; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Henderson will always be remembered as a distinguished son of Chicago, and as a man whose many and varied contributions to our great City will be felt for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Henry L. Henderson is survived by his wife of nearly twenty years, Jacqueline; by his two sons, Benjamin and James; and by countless relatives and friends; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fourteenth day of November, 2018, do hereby honor the life and memory of Henry L. Henderson, and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family; and