

Resolution No. 682-2019

Council Members: Kelley, Zone and Brancatelli

An emergency resolution recognizing Cuyahoga50, a community-wide celebration of 50 years of progress since the last Cuyahoga River fire, and the need for continued vigilance and partnership with regional, state, and federal entities to ensure every Clevelander has access to clean water.

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland honors those individuals in Cleveland and beyond that, over the last 50 years, are responsible for the recovery and re-naturalization of the Cuyahoga River, while also creating a model for how recreation and industry can co-exist; and

WHEREAS, from Wednesday, June 19th through Sunday, June 23rd, the City of Cleveland celebrates 50 years of progress on the Cuyahoga River with 25 events over 5 days, making Cuyahoga50 the largest series of clean water events in the country; and

WHEREAS, the Cuyahoga River is an important resource in northeast Ohio, providing jobs; drinking water; and fishing, boating, and swimming opportunities; and

WHEREAS, clean water has been a key component of Mayor Jackson's Sustainable Cleveland 2019 initiative, a 10-year plan to advance progress in making Cleveland a "green city on a blue lake"; and

WHEREAS; the Cuyahoga River has come a long way from its past, marking 50 years of progress since the river last caught on fire in on June 22, 1969; and

WHEREAS, the 1969 fire was just seen as another fire on the Cuyahoga River until Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes sparked public outcry and demanded action in Cleveland and across the nation, spurring Congress to establish the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and pass the federal Clean Water Act in 1972; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act established critical water quality protection rules that helped clean our lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands; and

WHEREAS; as we celebrate how much water quality has improved over the last 50 years, the Clean Water Act protections for streams and wetlands are being eliminated by the federal administration, ignoring the critical benefits provided by these water bodies; and

WHEREAS, by eliminating protections for these small and seasonal streams and wetlands, Lake Erie will likely experience more nutrient pollution leading to potentially larger and more toxic algal blooms; and

WHEREAS, agricultural pollution is largely unregulated and yet is the largest source of nutrient pollution to Lake Erie, a source of drinking water for approximately 3 million Ohioans; and

WHEREAS, this Council established the Lake Erie Water Quality Subcommittee to study the effects of algae blooms on our water supply; Cleveland Water and Water Pollution Control have served as leading water utilities, working to make significant water infrastructure upgrades that address algae blooms and other threats to clean water; and

WHEREAS, there is still an approximately \$27 billion need in Ohio over the next 20 years in water infrastructure upgrades; and

WHEREAS, clean water is not only our greatest natural resource, it also drives our economy – 1.5 million jobs in the Great Lakes region rely on our freshwater resource; and

WHEREAS, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is critical to the health of the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie, with more than \$13 million already invested to fund over 40 projects to remediate and restore the Cuyahoga River; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, the Cuyahoga River served to divide the east and west sides of the city more than unite them; now, a healthy Cuyahoga can help bridge the two, helping to extinguish racial barriers and serve as a community meeting place; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland is committed to addressing clean water issues related to affordability, access, education, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland will continue to implement the Cleveland Climate Action Plan, including its focus on making Clevelanders more resilient to the impacts of climate change, including more rain and more intense storms; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland is working toward returning to its roots as the “Forest City,” in collaboration with the Cleveland Tree Coalition, with the goal of a 30% tree canopy by 2040, and the ultimate goal of achieving 40%; and

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland requests all members of the Ohio General Assembly to call for the reinstatement of the Clean Water Rule to protect small, seasonal streams and wetlands; support increased funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and water infrastructure; prioritize green infrastructure and farm bill funding for projects that improve water quality; establish Ohio as a national leader in the development of the blue economy; and ensure our most vulnerable residents have access to clean, affordable water; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, the primary water problem was industrial pollution, while today, the major threats to clean water are different than those faced in 1969: climate change,

drought, plastic pollution, invasive species, agricultural runoff and harmful algae blooms, among others; and

WHEREAS, like in 1969, the City of Cleveland is committed to partnering with regional, state, and federal entities to address meet these challenges; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. This Council recognizes Cuyahoga50, a community-wide celebration of 50 years of progress since the last Cuyahoga River fire, and the need for continued vigilance and partnership with regional, state, and federal entities to ensure every Clevelander has access to clean water.

Section 2. This Council directs the Clerk of Council to send copies of this resolution to the Ohio Environmental Council, Max Schaefer, Regional Director and the Alliance for the Great Lakes.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted June 3, 2019.

Effective June 5, 2019.