

1 By Supervisors Sumner, Burgelis, Clancy,
2 Wasserman, Shea, Martin, Gómez-Tom, Logsdon, and Vincent

File No. 23-785

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5 **AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**
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7 Supporting the “rights of nature” movement across waterways and bodies of water in
8 Milwaukee County for protection and ensuring human activities do not interfere with
9 nature and its ability to be healthy, robust, and resilient
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11 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has developed a bold plan to achieve carbon
12 neutrality by 2050 and improve climate resiliency across all County operations; and
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14 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County’s vision for protection of its natural environment
15 and inhabitants residing in the County for generations, including Native and Indigenous
16 Communities, aligns with the County’s aim to be the healthiest County in the State of
17 Wisconsin; and
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19 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County recognizes the “rights of nature”, which was
20 initially enacted by the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin, as a sacred idea and policy to
21 protect Southeastern Wisconsin’s waterways and bodies of water from human harm;
22 and
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24 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County has historically passed resolutions, including File
25 No. 19-582, to create Climate Tasks Forces protecting the region’s environment and
26 reduce greenhouse emissions thereby achieving environmental equity; and
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28 WHEREAS, the Menominee, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk Tribes have called
29 Milwaukee County home for generations, and the Menominee Tribe passed File No. 19-
30 52 within their tribal government recognizing the inherent rights of the Menominee River
31 to flourish and naturally exist ~~free from any interruption~~; and
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33 WHEREAS, major bodies of water within Milwaukee County, including the
34 Menominee River, Milwaukee River, and Fox River as well as Lake Michigan, provide
35 essential biodiversity and wildlife habitats; and
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37 WHEREAS, these bodies of water require a “rights of nature” protection, which
38 will help Milwaukee County to be the healthiest in the State of Wisconsin due to its
39 restoration as a natural wonder; and
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41 WHEREAS, the “rights of nature” policy ~~is symbolic in nature~~, which recognizes

42 Milwaukee County's bodies of water as integral and essential to the environment,~~as~~
43 ~~this policy~~ returns rivers and lakes to ~~its~~ their natural purpose; and

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45 WHEREAS, the Committee on Community, Environment, and Economic
46 Development, at its meeting of September 11, 2023, recommended adoption of File No.
47 23-785 as amended (vote 4-0); now, therefore,

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49 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby supports
50 the "rights of nature" movement across waterways and bodies of water in Milwaukee
51 County for protection and ensuring human activities do not interfere with nature and its
52 ability to be healthy, robust, and resilient.

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