

Resolution No.

Submitted by:

The Honorable Ted Wheeler
Mayor of Portland, Oregon

SUPPORTING THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE SUPERFUND TAX

WHEREAS, “Superfund” is the name given to the environmental program established to address hazardous waste sites, and is also the name of the fund established by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980; and,

WHEREAS, nearly 70 million Americans—10 million of whom are children – live within four miles of a Superfund site, and are consequently may be exposed to toxic waste such as arsenic, benzene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, mercury and a range of solvents, and potentially contaminated groundwater; and,

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the agency responsible for listing and guiding the cleanup process for Superfund sites, states that many sites exist in economically distressed communities.

WHEREAS, the Superfund cleanup process is complex, as it involves the steps taken to assess sites, place them on the National Priorities List, and establish and implement appropriate cleanup plans; and,

WHEREAS, the Superfund cleanup program was largely financed through a “polluter pays” excise tax to ensure that parties who benefit from the manufacture or sale of substances that commonly cause environmental problems at hazardous waste sites, and not taxpayers, help bear the cost of cleanup when responsible parties cannot be identified; and,

WHEREAS, the Superfund “polluter pays” taxes expired on December 31, 1995, and since the expiration of the taxes, Superfund program funding has been largely financed from General Revenue transfers to the Superfund Trust Fund as well as from municipal general and utility funds, thus burdening the taxpayer with the costs of cleaning up abandoned hazardous waste sites, and creating lengthy, burdensome and expensive legal proceedings; and,

WHEREAS, the re-enactment of the Superfund tax will expedite the cleanup of Superfund sites across the country, thereby reducing risk to humans and the environment;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the United States Conference of Mayors urges the passage and enactment of legislation to reinstate the Superfund excise tax.

Projected Cost: Unknown