



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

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Title: RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month and honoring Raquel Garcia-Alvarez and Xochitl Lopez

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RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners recognizing National Hispanic Heritage Month and honoring Raquel Garcia-Alvarez and Xochitl Lopez

WHEREAS, National Hispanic Heritage Month, commonly referred to as Latinx Heritage Month, is a celebration of the innumerable contributions of people of Hispanic ancestry. During this time of acknowledgement, the traditions and culture of people with lineage from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America are honored; and

WHEREAS, national recognition began on September 17, 1968, when Congress passed Public Law 90-498 as a Joint Resolution authorizing and requesting the office of the President to issue an annual proclamation to designate the week including September 15th and 16th as National Hispanic Heritage Week in honor of the extraordinary role of Hispanic Americans. President Lyndon B. Johnson issued the first proclamation, Proclamation 3869, the same day; and

WHEREAS, the dates of September 15th and 16th were chosen specifically to incorporate the independence anniversaries for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which are on September 15th, and the anniversary for Mexico, which is on September 16th; and

WHEREAS, on August 17, 1988, Public Law 90-498 was amended by Public Law 100-402 by the 100th Congress to proclaim September 15th through October 15th as National Hispanic Heritage Month. President George H.W. Bush issued the first proclamation on September 14, 1989; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the Latin American countries of Chile and Belize celebrate their independence on September 18th and September 21st respectively, which occur during National Hispanic Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, as estimated from the 2020 United States Census, 25.3% (1.31 million) of the population in Cook County is of Hispanic origin. In Cook County, Latinx communities have formed financially and ethnically vibrant neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Latinx individuals of every generation have made contributions to the arts, education,

mathematics, science, literature, technology, and philanthropy worldwide, and have served bravely and honorably in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago celebrates the vast contributions made by Latinx residents in our communities and recognizes the hard work and dedication of our Latinx staff members; and

WHEREAS, in observance of Latinx Heritage Month, the District planned the following events: a Monarch Festival on September 10th; Latinx Stewardship Day on September 24th; and a Virtual Business Roundtable on September 27th; and

WHEREAS, the District honors the contributions of Raquel García-Álvarez and Xochitl Lopez, co-stewards from the Forest Preserves of Cook County, for their leadership and efforts through the Latinx Días de Voluntario at Possum Hollow program. Their mission is to help provide a safe space to connect with other Latinx. Their efforts and programming are led in Spanish, while helping protect the preserves and enjoy nature; and

WHEREAS, Raquel García-Álvarez is the Stewardship Program Coordinator and part of the Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee at the Forest Preserves of Cook County. She also founded Environmentalists of Color, a network which creates a safe space to amplify, connect, and support members to be leaders and thrive in various environmental fields; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. García-Álvarez has an undergraduate degree in Animal Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in Environment and Natural Resource Management from the University of Iceland in Reykjavík; and

WHEREAS, Xochitl Alicia Lopez is a dedicated environmentalist. For the last decade, she has worked in the environmental restoration field for Friends of the Forest Preserves, Stantec, and currently the Forest Preserves of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Lopez is a graduate of Curie High School and an alumni of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois where she earned her Bachelor of Art degree in biology and Spanish. Prior to her current role, she was a Student Conservation Association/AmeriCorps natural resource intern at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick County, Maryland; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and our staff, do hereby recognize National Hispanic Heritage Month and honor Raquel García-Álvarez and Xochitl Lopez; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and that a copy of same, suitably engrossed, be presented to Raquel García-Álvarez and Xochitl Lopez.

Dated: September 15, 2022