

1 **RESOLUTION URGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION OF**
2 **THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP,**
3 **ADOPT AND ENFORCE REGULATIONS AND POLICIES TO PROMOTE**
4 **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR THE CITIZENS OF**
5 **FULTON COUNTY AND THE ENTIRE STATE OF GEORGIA**

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8 **WHEREAS**, objective data developed over the last several decades
9 demonstrates that environmentally adverse land uses -- such as landfills, hazardous
10 waste sites and heavy industrial uses – are disproportionately located in areas whose
11 residents are predominantly minority and low-income; and

12 **WHEREAS**, as an example, a 1983 study by the U.S. General Accounting Office
13 found that, in the Southeast, African-Americans comprised the majority of the population
14 in three-fourths of the communities where hazardous waste landfills were located; and

15 **WHEREAS**, , a March 2012 report by GreenLaw titled “The Patterns of Pollution:
16 A Report on Demographics and Pollution in Metro Atlanta” (the “GreenLaw Report”)
17 identified the worst “environmental justice hotspot” in the region as the Fulton Industrial
18 Boulevard area, with approximately 55 pollution points in an area where nearly ninety
19 percent (90%) of residents are minorities; and

20 **WHEREAS**, another identified environmental hotspot exists in the northwest
21 Atlanta neighborhoods near the Bellwood Quarry; and

22 **WHEREAS**, in 1994, the United States government took initial steps to address
23 such concerns – now known as “environmental justice” -- when President Bill Clinton
24 signed Executive Order 12898, which required each federal agency to develop a
25 strategy “that identifies and addresses disproportionately high and adverse human
26 health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, or activities on minority
27 populations and low-income populations”; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) has
2 recently renewed its focus on environmental justice through the implementation of Plan
3 EJ 2014, which seeks to integrate environmental justice into EPA’s programs, policies
4 and activities; and

5 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County has sought to promote environmental justice since at
6 least 1996, with the Board of Commissioners’ adoption of a policy in the Fulton County
7 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that “the placement of both private and public uses
8 which may be considered environmentally adverse are not concentrated in low-income
9 communities or areas where a high percentage of the population belongs to racial and
10 ethnic minorities”; and

11 **WHEREAS**, in 2010, Fulton County created an Environmental Justice Program
12 to increase consideration of environmental and health impacts in the planning and
13 implementation of County projects; and

14 **WHEREAS**, the GreenLaw Report states that “Fulton County is an anomaly in
15 the region in this regard as most local governments . . . currently have no enforceable
16 policy or law regarding environmental justice”; and

17 **WHEREAS**, officials of the Atlanta BeltLine and community members are
18 currently developing a policy that will address environmental justice concerns in the
19 development of the Atlanta BeltLine; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the GreenLaw Report further states that forty-five (45) states –
21 including all states contiguous to Georgia -- currently have either 1) an employee,
22 working group or taskforce dedicated to environmental justice or 2) a policy or law in
23 effect that directly addresses environmental justice; and

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ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mark Massey, Clerk to the Commission R. David Ware, County Attorney

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