

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT of GREATER CHICAGO RESOLUTION

SPONSORED *by the* BOARD of COMMISSIONERS RECOGNIZING

JUNE 19th *as* JUNETEENTH

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19th, is an annual holiday which commemorates the anniversary of the date that slaves in Galveston, Texas were informed that they were free; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, is the oldest known celebration of the emancipation of slaves in the United States; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, as many Confederate states fell to the Union Army, many slave owners from Louisiana, Mississippi, and other southern states moved with their slaves to Texas due to its relative isolation and lack of monitoring by the Union Army. Thus, by the end of the Civil War, the number of slaves in Texas had greatly increased; and

WHEREAS, while General Robert E. Lee of the Confederate Army surrendered on April 9, 1865, marking the official end of the Civil War, news regarding the War traveled slowly to isolated areas of the South. Texas was the last state in the Confederacy to receive notice of the end of the War; and

WHEREAS, on June 19, 1865, Union soldier Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas and announced an end to the war. In reading "General Orders No. 3", he effectively announced that slavery no longer existed in the state of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the announcement officially gave effect to the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. While the Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in states that

had seceded from the Union, slavery as an institution in the United States did not end until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 6, 1865; and

WHEREAS, the first celebrations of Juneteenth can be traced back to Galveston, Texas as early as 1866. As former slaves moved north from Texas in search of a better life, they took with them the history of June 19th. As such, Juneteenth celebrations became widespread throughout African American communities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1980, due to the efforts of State Representative Al Edwards of Houston, Texas became the first state to proclaim Juneteenth a holiday. To date, 46 states and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth either as a state holiday or a day of observance. Additionally, in recent years, many companies have begun to acknowledge Juneteenth as a formal company holiday; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth symbolizes freedom, achievement, and racial equality not only for the descendants of former slaves, but for all Americans; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago recognizes June 19th as Juneteenth; 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.



DRAFTED *for* ADOPTION *on the* 16th DAY of JULY 2020.

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