

PRIORITIZING NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, the world's population will increase from seven billion to nine billion within the next 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations projects a 72 percent increase in global urban living by 2050; and

WHEREAS, 82 percent of all Americans currently live in cities and more than half live in a coastal watershed; and

WHEREAS, economic losses in the United States from natural disasters in 2012 exceeded \$180 billion, much of it spent in coastal areas; and

WHEREAS, the American Society of Civil Engineers recommends U.S. cities spend \$3.6 trillion to improve traditional infrastructure such as roads, levees and water mains, much of which is outdated and dilapidated; and

WHEREAS, many cities must rethink how to insure enough food, power and water for a growing population in the face of stronger, more destructive storms, sea level rise, and more frequent instances of drought and wildfire; and

WHEREAS, many cities are confronting increasingly urgent water quality and scarcity concerns; and

WHEREAS, improving air quality is a major priority of American mayors; and

WHEREAS, the connection between nature and American cities is inextricable; neither will thrive without consideration of the other; and

WHEREAS, groups such as The Nature Conservancy, other nonprofits, and state geological services can partner with local governments to identify and provide natural solutions; and

WHEREAS, nature offers a wealth of compounding benefits, such as more resilient coastlines, cleaner air and more robust and reliable freshwater supplies; and

WHEREAS, natural infrastructure is an effective alternative and companion to traditional gray infrastructure, is often more cost effective, promotes job creation, and provides compounding natural benefits to communities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors encourages its members to prioritize natural infrastructure and supports the funding and implementation of natural solutions to protect freshwater supplies, defend the nation's coastlines, maintain a healthy tree and greenspace cover and protect air quality, and create a new generation of environmental leaders, which ensures cities can support a growing population and prepare for the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors believes partnerships developed between local governments and non-profit organizations are an effective way to identify and implement opportunities for green infrastructure.

Projected Cost: Unknown