

Future First: Guardian of Future Generations Resolution

Whereas: Each person is entitled by right and has the responsibility to contribute to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of air, water, land, and other natural resources located within Minnesota; and

Whereas: It is MN policy (Minnesota Statutes, section 116B.01) to create and maintain within our state conditions under which human beings and nature co-exist in productive harmony in order that both present and future generations may enjoy the clean air and water, productive land, and other natural resources with which this state has been endowed; and

Whereas: It is in the public interest to put in place procedures to ensure we take responsibility and action to protect air, water, land and other natural resources located within Minnesota from pollution, impairment, or destruction, or to end such behavior; and

Whereas: The health and well-being of our grandchildren and our environment are worth more than all the wealth that can be taken from the land, and thus require our adoption of the international principles of intergenerational equity (humans hold the natural and cultural environment of the Earth in common both with other members of the present generation and with other generations, past and future – Weiss, 1990), sustainable development (development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – Brundtland Report, 1987), and the precautionary principle (when an activity raises threats to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically – Wingspread Conference 1998);

Resolved: Minnesota implement the principle of sustainable development by adopting and creating appropriate protection mechanisms and institutions, including the office of ombudsman and guardian for future generations, which will have a fiduciary duty to future generations, to assess and monitor the natural resources of Minnesota, restore them when necessary, advocate for the interests of future generations, and report to all on the status of their responsibilities. Duties could include 1) to make budget recommendations to fulfill this responsibility (i.e. river restoration, park maintenance) 2) to prepare an audit of the commons; 3) to review regulations for their impact on future generations.