

1 [Urging to Resolve a San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Lawsuit with the United  
2 States Environmental Protection Agency]

3 **Resolution urging the City Attorney and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission**  
4 **to immediately resolve its lawsuit regarding the Clean Water Act with the United States**  
5 **Environmental Protection Agency.**

6  
7 WHEREAS, The Clean Water Act exists to “restore and maintain the chemical,  
8 physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters;” and

9 WHEREAS, The Clean Water Act prohibits the “discharge of any pollutant by any  
10 person;” and

11 WHEREAS, This prohibition does not apply if a permit issued under the National  
12 Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program authorizes the discharge; and

13 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco challenged the Environmental  
14 Protection Agency’s (EPA) authority under the Clean Water Act in the Ninth Circuit Court of  
15 Appeals in connection with certain wastewater facilities; and

16 WHEREAS, The challenge focused on the inclusion of general narrative prohibitions in  
17 the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, which governs San  
18 Francisco's combined sewer system and wastewater treatment facility; and

19 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco argued that the EPA’s permit  
20 conditions were overly broad, particularly as they imposed general prohibitions without  
21 establishing specific numeric limits for discharges; and

22 WHEREAS, The Ninth Circuit ruled against San Francisco, determining that the EPA  
23 acted within its legal authority by enforcing general prohibitions in the permit to ensure  
24 compliance with water quality standards; and

1           WHEREAS, The court held that such prohibitions are permissible even in the absence  
2 of specific numeric limits, as they are necessary to protect water quality; and

3           WHEREAS, Narrative permits such as those at issue in the litigation are extremely  
4 common across the country, such that a ruling that invalidates or undermines them could  
5 greatly harm water quality nationwide - and provide new grounds for polluters to challenge  
6 water quality standards; and

7           WHEREAS, Particularly since the advent of a 6-3 conservative Supermajority on the  
8 Supreme Court, the Court has reduced the regulatory and enforcement powers of the EPA,  
9 include decisions blocking critically important climate protections; overturning longstanding  
10 precedents supporting environmental regulatory authority, and overturned fundamental Clean  
11 Water Act protections that have been in place for decades, thereby potentially stripping over  
12 half of the wetlands in the entire country without federal protection; and

13           WHEREAS, These actions have already gravely harmed the EPA's ability to enforce  
14 environmental laws and protect public health; and

15           WHEREAS, The lawsuit has the potential to seriously destabilize Clean Water Act  
16 protections at a time when environmental protections are already under serious threat; and

17           WHEREAS, The litigation has placed San Francisco in the position of championing the  
18 views and interests of the National Mining Association, American Gas Association, American  
19 Petroleum Institute, American Chemistry Council (all of whom have filed briefs supporting the  
20 City) and other representatives of the nation's biggest polluters; and

21           WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco is being represented in the  
22 Supreme Court by private counsel from a corporate law firm that regularly represents  
23 companies that seek less stringent regulation of their discharges into waters of the United  
24 States, and that is currently urging the Court to block EPA regulations limiting emissions and  
25 mercury and other toxic air pollutants emitted by coal-burning power plants; and

1           WHEREAS, The State of California, the State of Washington, the Commonwealth of  
2 Massachusetts, along with the states of Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan,  
3 Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Wisconsin, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the  
4 District of Columbia have filed amicus curiae briefs on behalf of the Environmental Protection  
5 Agency; now, therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors of the City and County of  
7 San Francisco urges the General Manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission,  
8 the Commission of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and the City Attorney's  
9 Office of the City and County of San Francisco to resolve the litigation promptly without  
10 provoking a decision from the Supreme Court; and, be it

11           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the  
12 Environmental Protection Agency and the San Francisco City Attorney to immediately  
13 schedule and participate in a mediation in an effort to promptly resolve this litigation through a  
14 settlement that would make a Supreme Court decision moot.



**City and County of San Francisco**  
**Tails**  
**Resolution**

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**File Number:** 240940

**Date Passed:** October 08, 2024

Resolution urging the City Attorney and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to immediately resolve its lawsuit regarding the Clean Water Act with the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

October 07, 2024 Land Use and Transportation Committee - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE

October 07, 2024 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED AS AMENDED AS A COMMITTEE REPORT

October 08, 2024 Board of Supervisors - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE

Ayes: 10 - Chan, Dorsey, Engardio, Mandelman, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai and Walton

Absent: 1 - Stefani

October 08, 2024 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED AS AMENDED

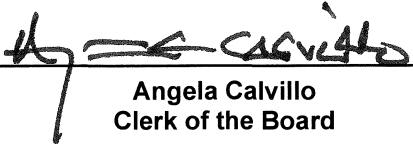
Ayes: 8 - Chan, Engardio, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Stefani and Walton

Noes: 2 - Dorsey and Mandelman

Absent: 1 - Safai

File No. 240940

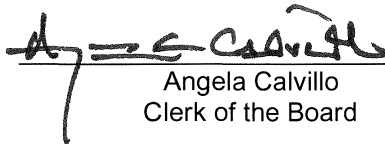
I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED AS AMENDED on 10/8/2024 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

  
Angela Calvillo  
Clerk of the Board

Unsigned  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

10/18/2024  
Date Approved

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

  
Angela Calvillo  
Clerk of the Board

10/18/2024  
Date