

1 [Commending UCSF.]

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3 **Resolution commending UCSF for its leadership, innovation, and commitment to**
4 **removing mercury from our environment.**

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6 WHEREAS, Mercury is a gray, liquid metal that has been labeled by the United States
7 Environmental Protection Agency as a PBY, or Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic
8 pollutant and is clearly toxic to all living creatures; and

9 WHEREAS, Miniscule amounts of Mercury can cause neurological damage to humans
10 and animals if inhaled or absorbed, and contributes to behavioral problems and loss of
11 intelligence in young children and has been linked to impairment of immune and reproductive
12 systems and cardiovascular diseases; and

13 WHEREAS, Mercury poisoning is particularly devastating to infants, the elderly, and
14 pregnant women; and

15 WHEREAS, Mercury accumulates in the tissues of animals, including fish, and
16 become concentrated up the food chain, so that larger fish have higher concentrations of
17 mercury; and

18 WHEREAS, Many persons eat fish from the San Francisco Bay, and many San
19 Franciscans fish for food from the San Francisco Bay as an important part of their diet; and,

20 WHEREAS, Each day, approximately 163 grams of mercury enters San Francisco's
21 water treatment plants through the sewer system, of which ten percent escapes capture and
22 treatment and is discharged into the San Francisco Bay; and,

23 WHEREAS, Mercury that is commonly used in old-fashioned fever thermometers
24 contains between one-half and one gram of mercury, which is enough to contaminate five

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1 million gallons of San Francisco Bay water up to government established toxicity limits—
2 enough contaminated water to fill 200 Olympic-sized swimming pools; and,

3 WHEREAS, Mercury is also found in dental amalgams, certain types of hospital waste,
4 fluorescent light bulbs, thermostats, barometers, switches and relays; and,

5 WHEREAS, Mercury, in order to avoid being released into the environment, should
6 never be disposed of in landfills, household or commercial refuse containers, or through
7 plumbing systems, and must be disposed of at select facilities in a responsible manner; and,

8 WHEREAS, In April of 2000, the City and County of San Francisco, in recognition of
9 the dangers associated with mercury thermometers, banned the manufacture and sale of
10 mercury thermometers and promoted safe disposal of them; and,

11 WHEREAS, The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) participated with the
12 State of California in a mercury reduction program, which incorporated critical mercury
13 eradication steps such as a mercury fluorescent light bulb recycling program,

14 WHEREAS, The State of California, due in part to their coordination with the UCSF
15 Environmental Health and Safety Department and the UCSF Medical Center, received an
16 award from the EPA for their mercury reduction program; and,

17 WHEREAS, Healthcare Without Harm, an organization dedicated to the reduction in
18 the use of toxic materials in hospitals, among other environmentally important goals,
19 recognized the achievements of UCSF and the UCSF Medical Center by presenting them
20 with an honor; and,

21 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco, Department of the Environment,
22 under the leadership of Director Jared Blumenfeld, and UCSF, under the leadership of
23 Director Eugene Lau, Environmental Health and Safety at UCSF, have come together to
24 create a Mercury Thermometer Exchange Program; and,

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Supervisor Maxwell

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1 WHEREAS, The Mercury Thermometer Exchange is a long-term program that not only
2 encourages responsible disposal of Mercury Thermometers and allows residents of San
3 Francisco to safely exchange toxic mercury thermometers for non-toxic, new digital
4 thermometers: and,

5 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco has provided a grant to purchase
6 digital thermometers for residents to receive when they exchange their toxic mercury
7 thermometers; and,

8 WHEREAS, The UCSF Bookstore will serve as the City's first year round site for the
9 exchange of toxic mercury thermometers for new, safe digital thermometers; and,

10 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco and UCSF kicked off the Mercury
11 Thermometer Exchange Program on December 3, 2002, and have since received over 160
12 mercury thermometers within the first two days; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco commends UCSF for its
14 leadership, innovation, and commitment to removing mercury from our environment; and, be
15 it further,

16 FURTHER RESOLVED That the City and County of San Francisco honors UCSF for
17 its cooperating with the City to provide a national model to allow for year-round exchange of
18 mercury thermometers and thereby helping to create a cleaner and safer environment for all
19 San Franciscans.

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