



RESOLUTION No. _____

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

RESOLUTION DECLARING JULY 2024 AS PLASTIC FREE JULY IN NEVADA COUNTY

WHEREAS, On February 7th, 2024, the Nevada County Board of Supervisors renewed Climate Resilience as a priority objective “to safeguard Nevada County’s economic durability, environmental integrity, and public health and safety by preparing for, adapting to, and mitigating changing climate conditions in a way that reflects our rural quality of life”; and

WHEREAS, as such, participating in Plastic Free July provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the benefits of small behavioral changes that could have a material impact on reducing the harmful impacts of plastics in our environment; and

WHEREAS, according to data provided by the Ocean Conservancy, the United States (U.S.) accounts for just 4% of the global population but 17% of all plastic waste worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that over 1.1 million tons of U.S. waste is from single-use foodware such as to-go cups, straws, and food wrapped in plastic packaging; and

WHEREAS, of the plastic waste generated in the U.S, Ocean Conservancy reports that just 9.3% was collected for recycling, with the balance ending up in landfills, littered, or illegally dumped in the environment; and

WHEREAS, once in the environment, plastic pollution can take up to 1,000 years or more to decompose and create threats to numerous species, including humans, as well as to the beauty and health of our natural environment; and

WHEREAS, as plastics breakdown further into microplastics, plastic particles (less than 5mm across) enter our food chain and municipal drinking water systems and release toxic chemicals which then accumulate in our food and drinking water, creating serious health impacts; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the production of plastic is one of the most energy-intensive manufacturing processes in the world as plastic is made from fossil fuels and transformed into plastic via heat; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reports that in 2019, the production of plastics generated 1.8 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions, nearly 3.5% of the global total; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Plastic Free July was launched as a key initiative of the Plastic Free Foundation aimed at supporting the foundation’s vision of seeing a world free of plastic waste; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, an estimated 89 million individuals across 190 countries participated in Plastic Free July, and of the 2023 participants, 87% of made at least one lasting change, including reducing collective plastic consumption by 240 million kilograms; and

WHEREAS, over the last 5 years, Plastic Free July participants have collectively avoided 10 billion kilograms of waste, including 1.4 billion kilograms of plastic, by changing their behaviors and consumption patterns; and

WHEREAS, these changes all lead to a reduction in the impacts and risks associated with high levels of plastic pollution in our environment; and

WHEREAS, the theme for 2024's Plastic Free July campaign is "Small steps, big difference"; and

WHEREAS, participants are encouraged to make small behavioral changes such as refilling reusable water bottles from the tap, switching from plastic wrap to reusable containers or wax wraps, and enjoying their coffee or tea from a real mug instead of a single-use container; and

WHEREAS, by lowering our collective use of single-use plastics, the threat of toxic plastic additives entering our water system is mitigated which supports not only the health of our local community, but also the health and economic vitality of California; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada watershed, where Nevada County is located, supplies drinking water to over 27 million people throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the Water Education Foundation also notes that the rain and snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada goes to irrigate farms that ultimately produce nearly half of the nation's fruits, nuts, and vegetables; and

WHEREAS, the Yuba River, which gathers rain and snowmelt from over 1,300 square miles of the Sierra Nevada, serves as key passageway for this water to move downstream and is a significant contributor to the state's water system; and

WHEREAS, The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) serves as our local waterkeeper organization in Nevada County, safeguarding the environment and organizing efforts to restore the health of this system; and

WHEREAS, since 1997, SYRCL has removed more than 135 tons of garbage and recycling from the South Yuba River, diverting it from the state's drinking water and food supply, and helping to reduce pollution in our local watershed; and

WHEREAS, making small changes to our daily behaviors, such as swapping our single-use coffee cup for a reusable mug, will serve to collectively make a big impact on our environment and the public health risks associated with plastics in our environment; and

WHEREAS, under the direction of its Climate Resilience priority objective, the County will identify ways to reduce plastic waste and save County resources.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada, State of California, hereby declares July 2024 as Plastic Free July in the County of Nevada.