



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
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TO: Suzanne Shaw, Chair
Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Rebecca A. Head, Director
Department of Environment & Infrastructure Services

DATE: September 19, 2001

SUBJECT: Partnership for Children's Environmental Health and the Environment

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Washtenaw County Board of authorizes Washtenaw County to join the Partnership for Children's Environmental Health and the Environment. Participation in this partnership will encourage and support communication and collaboration across sectors to catalyze a strong children's environmental health movement. The Environmental Issues Group is recommending membership so to benefit from the resources and opportunities available to Partners.

BACKGROUND:

Children, through their daily activities, come into direct contact with their environment more frequently – and with more intensity – than adults. Kids play in the dirt; they roll down grassy hills; they place foreign objects in their mouths. As a result, children are also exposed to environmental health risks at a greater rate than adults. Further, children require a greater intake of food, water, and air relative to their body size than do adults, and this high metabolic rate increases children's exposure to environmental toxins.

However, many of the regulations for environmental contaminants are based on adults' ability to tolerate certain levels of exposure. Recognizing that children's environmental health needs are different than adults', concerned representatives from over sixty government, academic, and grassroots organizations have joined the Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment. A lightly administered, non-bureaucratic, diverse group of organizations (Attachment C) working nationally and internationally on issues related to children's environmental health, the Partnership coalesced following the Children's Environmental Health Summit of September 1999. There are no requirements for membership; to join, an organization simply ratifies the Guiding Principles (Attachment B) to demonstrate commitment to children's environmental health.

DISCUSSION:

The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has repeatedly demonstrated its support for the protection of the environment, and the Board established the Environmental Issues Group (EIG) to provide "a comprehensive, coordinated interagency approach to solving existing environmental problems, to working proactively to prevent future ones, to protect and preserve the environment and its resources." Further, the Board has entrusted the coordination and chairship of interagency Environmental Issues Group to the Department of Environment and Infrastructure Services (DEIS). The Department of Environment and Infrastructure Service's vision is to be the "the primary provider of

environmental and environmental health protective services to Washtenaw County, will become a recognized leader in sustainable practices, resulting in positive social, environmental and economic impact on communities and the natural world.” Joining the Partnership for Children’s Health and the Environment will strengthen Washtenaw County’s role as a world-class leader in environmental protection, with a particular focus on collaborative work in addressing emergent issues such as children’s environmental health.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

No impacts are indicated for this Resolution.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

There is no budget impact with this action.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

Indirect costs are not applicable to this action.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

This action allows Washtenaw County the opportunity to partner with other signatory organizations as outlined in Attachment C.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

The Resolution conforms to County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

- Attachment A Resolution to join the Partnership for Children’s Health and the Environment
- Attachment B Guiding Principles for Children’s Environmental Health
- Attachment C List of Signatory Organizations

A RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 19, 2001

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Academy of Sciences have determined that children are uniquely susceptible to hazardous environmental exposures, and that many of these exposures can cause or contribute to disease as well as disrupt children's development, learning, and behavior; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners has established the Environmental Issues Group (EIG) to provide "a comprehensive, coordinated interagency approach to solving existing environmental problems, to working proactively to prevent future ones, to protect and preserve the environment and its resources," and has entrusted the coordination and chairship of interagency Environmental Issues Group to the Department of Environment and Infrastructure Services (DEIS); and

WHEREAS, Washtenaw County's Guiding Principles six (6) and seven (7) commit to "focus on the root causes of problems" and to "provide leadership on intragovernmental, intergovernmental and intersectoral cooperation and collaboration aimed at improving services to County citizens;" and

WHEREAS, the Partnership for Children's Environmental Health represents a large group of diverse organizations that collaborate nationally and internationally on issues related to children's environmental health; and

WHEREAS, this Resolution has been reviewed by the County Administrator's office and the Ways and Means Committee;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes Washtenaw County to join the Partnership for Children's Environmental Health and the Environment

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Clerk's Office to send a certified copy of the resolution to Elise Miller, Executive Director, Institute for Children's Environmental Health, PO Box 757, Langley, WA 98260