

To: The City of Winnipeg's Executive Policy Committee
Re: EPC Meeting, July 5, 2023
Agenda Item: Recommendation that the City of Winnipeg Sign the Montreal Pledge.

Mr. Mayor and Councillors,

I am delighted that the City's Water Waste and Environment Standing Committee has recommended that Winnipeg sign the Montreal Pledge. As you know, based on your receipt of previous letters of support, there are numerous organizations like Trees Please, representing thousands of Winnipeggers, that support the pledge motion. I very much hope that EPC forwards the pledge for a council vote as soon as possible.

By signing the pledge the city will indicate that it is well on the way to viewing our natural infrastructure - whether marshes, trees, intact forests or grasslands – as essential to our city's wellbeing and resilience in the face of climate change. It will also show that our city council recognizes that what is good for other species is also vitally important for us.

It is my hope, that by the signing pledge, the city will not only act on existing and upcoming policies and strategies – such as the Greenspace Master plan and Biodiversity Policy - but will also use the pledge as inspiration for even more expansive plans to green our city and improve its resilience.

There is still much to be done whether by instituting a citywide composting program, exploring the possibility of developing urban farms on public land or utilizing nature-based solutions to protect our air and water. Equally important is the process of applying the pledge and its key objectives – to protect, expand and enhance biodiversity - as a lens through which to view all city led infrastructure projects, in order to mitigate their environmental impact.

We hope we can count on your commitment to move Winnipeg from one of the lowest greenness scores in the country to a city that is a national leader in the protection and enhancement of nature in all its complex diversity.

Our natural assets are among the best and least expensive defences our city has at its disposal in the struggle to adapt to and withstand the impact climate change. By preserving, rehabilitating and expanding those assets, we will also help in the global effort to avert massive species loss.

These are ambitious goals and current and future generations will thank you for all your efforts in helping to achieve them.

I look forward to the signing of the Montreal Pledge.

Sincerely,

Erna Buffie