PRESENTATION TO WINNIPEG CITY COUNCIL, JULY 13, 2023

WWE Report Item 2 - The Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity

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My submission today on behalf of OURS-Winnipeg is in support of the Winnipeg Public Service Report[1] from the EPC meeting on July 5, 2023, that recommends:

- the City of Winnipeg become a signatory to the Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity[2]

It is anticipated that the Pledge will be signed without delay as a timeline is not indicated in the public service report.

The report identifies the breadth of alignment and support of the Pledge for forthcoming City policies. The pledge will be especially complimentary as the City works toward completion of the Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan and Biodiversity Policy.

The scientific evidence of biodiversity loss is alarming and taking action is imperative. Cities are at the forefront of observing biodiversity loss and have a large impact both locally and around the world. Biodiversity is foundational to our existence and it is crucial that we halt the loss of biodiversity and begin its restoration.

The Montreal Pledge's 15 easily relatable, clearly stated, practical actions for cities to take are based on the detailed COP15 Global Biodiversity Framework Goals and Targets, agreed to by almost every country in the world. The momentum on protecting nature has never been greater.

A quote from the Global Biodiversity Framework:

"It is for all - for the whole of government and the whole of society. Its success requires political will and recognition at the highest level of government and relies on action and cooperation by all levels of government and by all actors of society." [4]

Voting today to make Winnipeg a signatory of the Montreal Pledge is something to personally feel very good about. Bold and ambitious action is needed now if we are to leave a healthy planet for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

As of June 22, 2023 a total of 61 cities worldwide have signed the pledge; up from the original 47 cities that signed during the Biodiversity Conference in December 2022.[3]

It is commendable that the City and its Councillors are formalizing steps toward protecting biodiversity. Thank you to Councillor Gilroy for the motion for Winnipeg to become a signatory of the Montreal Pledge, the WWE Committee (Councillors Mayes, Santos, Eadie and Gilroy) and EPC (Mayor Gillingham and Councillors Lukes, Orlikow, Mayes and Rollins) who voted to support the pledge and to move it forward to Council, and to those who will vote in favour today. Much appreciation is extended to Councillor Rollins for the motions to create the Master Greenspace Plan and Biodiversity Policy and to Councillor Mayes who seconded both motions and provides important environmental contributions as chair of the Environment Committee and to many environmental concerns over time. Thank you all!

1. EPC July 5, 2023 meeting WWE report from June 23, 2023, Item # 2 - City Clerk's Decision Making Information System (winnipeg.ca)
2. vdm_montreal-pledge_2022.pdf
3. Montréal Pledge: Call for COP15 launched to world's cities | Ville de Montréal (montreal.ca)
4. United Nations Environment Program Decision Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological, December 19, 2022, page 5 https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf