

1 **RESOLUTION NO.**

2 **WHEREAS**, per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of
3 human-made chemicals that have been used in various industrial and consumer
4 products since the 1950s, including in firefighting equipment such as turnout gear
5 and firefighting foam; and

6 **WHEREAS**, PFAS are known to persist in the environment and in the
7 human body, meaning they do not break down and can accumulate over time,
8 potentially leading to adverse health effects, including cancer, liver damage,
9 decreased fertility, and increased risk of asthma and thyroid disease; and

10 **WHEREAS**, firefighters, who are already at an increased risk for certain
11 types of cancer due to their occupational exposure to hazardous substances, may
12 face additional health risks from exposure to PFAS in their equipment; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the State of Texas and the federal government have both
14 recognized the potential dangers of PFAS, and there is growing legislative and
15 regulatory momentum to restrict or eliminate their use in consumer and industrial
16 products; and

17 **WHEREAS**, studies have shown that PFAS can contaminate drinking water
18 sources, soil, and air, contributing to widespread environmental pollution that can
19 affect not only firefighters but also the general public; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the City has a responsibility to protect its natural resources,
21 including its water supply, from contaminants like PFAS that pose long-term risks
22 to environmental and public health; and

23 **WHEREAS**, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) has
24 called for a ban on the manufacture and use of PFAS in firefighting foam and
25 equipment due to the associated health risks to firefighters; and

26 **WHEREAS**, several cities and states across the United States have already
27 taken steps to phase out PFAS in firefighting gear and foams, demonstrating the
28 feasibility of transitioning to safer alternatives; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the City has a history of proactive environmental initiatives,
30 and removing PFAS from firefighting equipment aligns with the City’s broader
31 sustainability and public health goals; and

32 **WHEREAS**, the availability of PFAS-free firefighting gear is increasing,
33 with manufacturers developing innovative products that provide necessary
34 protection without relying on harmful chemicals; and

35 **WHEREAS**, firefighters in Austin have expressed concern about the
36 potential health risks associated with long-term exposure to PFAS, and their well-
37 being is of utmost importance to the City; and

38 **WHEREAS**, the City aims to set an example for other municipalities in
39 Texas and across the nation by prioritizing the health of its first responders and the
40 environment in its policy decisions; and

41 **WHEREAS**, the City recognizes that a transition to PFAS-free firefighting
42 equipment will require careful planning, financial resources, and collaboration with
43 multiple stakeholders, and is committed to making this transition in a responsible
44 and timely manner; and

45 **WHEREAS**, alternative firefighting equipment and materials that do not
46 contain PFAS are increasingly available and can provide effective protection and
47 firefighting capabilities without the associated health risks; and

48 **WHEREAS**, the City seeks to be a leader in reducing exposure to harmful
49 chemicals and ensuring a safer, healthier environment for its residents and first
50 responders; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

51 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

52 The City Manager is directed to develop and implement a plan to phase out
53 the use of firefighting equipment and materials containing PFAS within the Austin
54 Fire Department and other city-operated fire services. The plan shall include but
55 not be limited to:

- 56 ● A comprehensive inventory of current firefighting equipment and
57 materials containing PFAS.
- 58 ● Identification of PFAS-free alternatives that meet or exceed current
59 safety and performance standards.
- 60 ● A timeline for the gradual replacement of PFAS-containing equipment,
61 with the goal of complete removal within three (3) years from the
62 adoption of this resolution.
- 63 ● An assessment of the financial implications of this transition, including
64 potential funding sources or budget adjustments.
- 65 ● Collaboration with other relevant city departments, public safety
66 organizations, and external experts to ensure the most effective and
67 efficient transition, including with the Department of Aviation to ensure
68 that any proposed timeline and plan for elimination of PFAS-containing
69 materials and equipment takes into account the availability of alternatives
70 satisfying Federal Aviation Administration requirements.
- 71 ● The City Manager is further directed to explore and recommend options
72 for the safe disposal or recycling of PFAS-containing firefighting
73 equipment in a manner that minimizes environmental impact.
- 74 ● Provide baseline testing to determine current PFAS system levels for all
75 firefighters.

77 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

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79 The City Manager shall provide annual updates to the City Council on the
80 progress of this initiative, including any challenges encountered, adjustments to the
81 timeline, and the identification of additional opportunities to reduce PFAS
82 exposure within city operations.

83 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

84 The City Council encourages other municipalities, regional authorities, and
85 state agencies to join efforts to eliminate PFAS from firefighting equipment and
86 materials and to advocate for stronger regulations and support at the state and
87 federal levels for PFAS-free alternatives.

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90 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2024 **ATTEST:** _____

91 Myrna Rios
92 City Clerk