

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON
RECOGNIZING THE 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE OLYMPIC PIPELINE
EXPLOSION**

WHEREAS, on June 10, 1999, a petroleum pipeline owned and operated by the Olympic Pipe Line Company ruptured in Bellingham, releasing approximately 237,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline into Whatcom Creek in Whatcom Falls Park; and

WHEREAS, the gasoline ignited and exploded causing the tragic deaths of two young boys – Wade King and Stephen Tsiorvas – and a young man – Liam Wood – who were beloved residents of this community; and

WHEREAS, the explosion burned approximately 26 acres of riparian forest and killed more than 100,000 fish and 3,000 birds and small mammals; and

WHEREAS, the City initiated an emergency response to skim petroleum from the water, remove contaminated material and hazardous trees from the streambed and banks, replaced streambed gravel, conducted invasive plant control and added native trees in the burn zone; and

WHEREAS, a Washington state law was passed in 2000 that expanded the Utilities and Transportation Commission’s authority, and allowed them to provide state inspectors to better enforce federal laws on pipelines in Washington state; and

WHEREAS, numerous citizens and agencies came together to press the federal government to pass additional legislation to prevent such a tragic event from happening in any other community, resulting in the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 and the Pipeline, Inspection, Protection, Enforcement and Safety Act of 2006; and

WHEREAS, the City successfully joined with the parents who lost their children to advocate for the creation of a national Pipeline Safety Trust that to this day continues the push for safer pipelines; and

WHEREAS, after 20 years of intense restoration actions, including instream habitat restoration projects at Cemetery Creek (2006), Salmon Park (2006) and Red Tail Reach (2008), Whatcom Creek ecosystems show significant signs of recovery; and

WHEREAS, City-sponsored Washington Conservation Corps crews have re-vegetated over 200 acres; and

WHEREAS, the City continues to conduct long-term monitoring and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, June 10th is recognized as National Pipeline Safety Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM HEREBY:

1. Recognizes the 20-year anniversary of the Olympic Pipeline explosion in Whatcom Falls Park.
2. Encourages our community to observe and honor this day and those affected by these tragic events.

PASSED by the Council this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Council President

APPROVED by me this _____ day of _____, 2019.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Office of the City Attorney