URGING GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT MTBE IS REMOVED IMMEDIATELY FROM GASOLINE IN ALL AREAS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NOT REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL CLEAN AIR ACT TO USE A FUEL OXYGENATE, INCLUDING THE ENTIRE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA.

WHEREAS, Methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) is a gasoline additive used to boost octane and to meet a federal Clean Air Act requirement to add an oxygenate to gasoline in areas classified with severe or extreme ozone (smog) pollution; and

WHEREAS, The California Department of Health Services reports detection of MTBE in dozens of California drinking water wells and surface water reservoirs; and

WHEREAS, A June 1998 report by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory estimated that there were a minimum of 10,000 California groundwater sites impacted by MTBE; and

WHEREAS, MTBE has been found by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to be a possible carcinogen; and

WHEREAS, Health effects have been reported for inhalation of MTBE, including headaches, dizziness, irritated eyes, burning of the nose and throat, coughing, disorientation, and nausea; and

WHEREAS, Even a very small amount of MTBE can contaminate a drinking water supply with the detectable taste an odor of turpentine; and

WHEREAS, MTBE contaminates water supplies from leaking underground storage tanks, from gasoline releases from routine use of motor boat or personal watercraft engines, or from gas tanks after car accidents; and

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WHEREAS, Once MTBE contaminates drinking water, it moves through that water approximately 50 times further and faster than other dangerous components of gasoline such as benzene, toluene and xylene; and

WHEREAS, MTBE resists degradation and treatment once in water, and is more difficult and expensive to clean up than other components of gasoline; and

WHEREAS, Governor Gray Davis issued an Executive Order on March 25, 1999 to remove MTBE from gasoline at the earliest possible date, but not later than December 31, 2002; and

WHEREAS, The California Air Resources Board codified the Governor’s order for an MTBE ban at Title XIII of the California Code, Regulatory Codes Sections 2260-2272; and

WHEREAS, California Energy Commission data for the first and second quarters of 2000 show that MTBE use is increasing in California; and

WHEREAS, Several Northern California oil refiners have stated that they intend to discontinue using MTBE if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grants California’s request for a waiver of the oxygenate requirement; and

WHEREAS, Oil refiners in Northern California supply gasoline almost exclusively to Northern California; and

WHEREAS, There are only three areas in California that are currently required to add oxygenates to gasoline: the Sacramento Metropolitan area, Los Angeles, and Southern California; and

WHEREAS, The remainder of California counties, including the five county San Francisco metropolitan area, are not subject to the federal oxygenate requirement; therefore, any waiver provided by the U.S. EPA will be meaningless for elimination of MTBE in these areas; and

WHEREAS, According to calculations by the San Francisco-based environmental group Bluewater Network, approximately 80 percent of the MTBE added to gasoline, or 383 million
gallons per year, in Northern California is used outside of the Sacramento area, and therefore in areas where there is no legal requirement to add an oxygenate to gasoline; and

WHEREAS, Should cities and counties such as San Francisco, which are not subject to the oxygenate requirement, choose voluntarily to include oxygenates, nationwide availability of ethanol can easily provide additional supply of environmentally preferred vehicle fuels; and

WHEREAS, The California Energy Commission has determined that sufficient feedstocks exist in California to produce as much as three million gallons per year of biomass ethanol, which is more than four times the volume needed to replace the oxygenate benefits of MTBE; and

WHEREAS, The elimination of MTBE will provide substantial opportunities for the development of biomass ethanol industry in California, providing rural economic opportunities, reduction of agricultural and municipal waste, and decreased global warming emissions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the Governor Gray Davis to take all possible action to ensure that MTBE is removed immediately from gasoline in all areas of Northern California not required by the federal Clean Air Act to add an oxygenate, including the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

SUPERVISOR AMMIANO

SUPERVISOR TOM AMMIANO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Resolution urging Governor Gray Davis to take all possible action to ensure that MTBE is removed immediately from gasoline in all areas of Northern California not required by the Federal Clean Air Act to use a fuel oxygenate, including the entire San Francisco Bay Area.

October 16, 2000  Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED
   Ayes: 11 - Ammiano, Becerril, Bierman, Brown, Katz, Kaufman, Leno, Newsom, Teng, Yaki, Yee
I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on October 16, 2000 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Gloria L. Young
Clerk of the Board

OCT 27 2000
Date Approved

Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr.