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RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE GRAND RIVER WATERWAY

- Whereas a State funded initiative called the Grand River Waterway Project claims that a dredging initiative to make the Grand River navigable from Grand Rapids to Lake Michigan by larger power and sailboats “...is a new initiative that will benefit West Michigan by safely linking the Grand River water course from Lake Michigan to downtown Grand Rapids. This effort will result in greater economic vitality for our area of the state through enhanced recreational activities and increased tourism,” and
- Whereas no reliable evidence exists of what levels of contamination lurk beneath the first few inches of sediment in the Grand River between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids and
- Whereas we have only recently discovered the PFAS calamity; there is likely other concern in the 100 years of industrial sediment beneath the river bed, and
- Whereas there is no indication that any mechanism is available to provide for ongoing dredging, buoy placement and oversight that will become a massive public effort requiring the establishment of at least one new well-funded public agency to oversee ongoing river operations, and
- Whereas width of the new waterway and impacts on wetlands, floodplains and endangered species is unknown, and
- Whereas additional bank degradation and soil erosion from power boat wake has not been evaluated nor predicted and funding for mitigation efforts has not been identified, and
- Whereas dredging will damage the natural riverbed, taking out submerged trees and other obstacles that create habitat for fish, clams, waterfowl, small mammals and other river wildlife, and
- Whereas this idea negates decades of planning and development of a natural water trail effort that is intended to link natural areas along the Grand River with Lake Michigan to promote ecotourism, and
- Whereas there has been no research into how much revenue will be lost to Michigan as a result of spoiling the natural integrity of the banks of the Grand River, and
- Whereas the bascule bridge in Grand Haven opens too often and upsets traffic patterns for hundreds of thousands of motorists each year, and no study has been done to advance the construction of a fixed span bridge to

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minimize the tragic economic impacts on our surface transportation systems, and

Whereas river mouth boating infrastructure is occupied and overcrowded, no study is available to suggest where additional boat traffic will purchase fuel, seek safe harbor, tie off or access the land in the downriver area, and

Whereas river congestion is already at critical levels during peak times, and exponential growth of boating traffic will confound commercial traffic and will make recreational boating in the Lower Grand and on Lake Michigan a miserable experience for all, and

Whereas United States Coast Guard and Ottawa County Marine Patrol units are already at maximum capacity; hundreds of additional boats would create a dangerously unsafe harbor and would nullify effective enforcement of boating safety rules, and

Whereas studies conducted thus far assume the river is already dredged to the Bass River inlet, over 1/3 of the total length that would need to be dredged. Federal funding for dredging from the Railroad Bridge in Grand Haven to the Bass River inlet has been intermittent at best, having last occurred in 1996, 1975 and 1964.

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Grand Haven City Council hereby requests that all efforts to dredge any portion of the Grand River from US-31 to Grand Rapids that will negatively impact commerce, public safety, human health and the environment be suspended immediately and that any future investigation begin with substantial input from those populations that will suffer the consequences before public funds are appropriated.