RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2015

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOREST HEALTH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER (FHC) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, FOR THE EXPANSION OF CRITICAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND TO ADDRESS INCREASED THREATS FROM INVASIVE PESTS AND PATHOGENS ON TREES AND FORESTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION.
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WHEREAS, a growing number of experts, public officials, and citizens recognize that tree and forest resources critical to our country's economy and urban and natural landscapes are facing numerous threats, including a variety of pests and pathogens with the demonstrated potential to completely destroy foundational tree species, degrade forest productivity, and deteriorate ecosystem value; and

WHEREAS, several tree species (e.g. American chestnut, ash, hemlock) have been lost or are disappearing at an alarming rate, and other valuable tree species such as oak (a foundational tree species compromises nearly 50% of hardwood sawtimber volume in Kentucky and also contributes to this region's distinct bourbon industry) are equally imperiled; and

WHEREAS, the University of Kentucky ("UK"), the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Southern Research Station, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry have partnered to form the Forest Health Research and Education Center ("FHC") on UK's campus; and

WHEREAS, the FHC plans to assemble a core group of researchers and educators to collaborate with experts around the world with the goal of solving the region's most pressing forest health challenges; and

WHEREAS, the FHC will conduct: (1) biological research to understand and enhance tree resistance and forest/ecosystem responses to biotic and abiotic stressors; (2) social research on the economic and cultural impacts of tree/forest/ecosystem loss, as well as factors affecting adoption of new technologies and approaches in order to improve forest health; and (3) outreach programs meant to educate stakeholders and researchers on forest health issues, connect these parties through participatory research networks, and develop resistant trees and improve forest resilience; and

WHEREAS, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government has been awarded

the 'Tree City USA' designation for twenty-six (26) years by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of Foresters, for its strong commitment to the management of its urban forests; and

WHEREAS, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government acknowledges this project's potential to maintain the environmental and social benefit of trees in urban and natural forests, and to provide important economic opportunities throughout the region.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

Section 1 - That the above recitals are incorporated herein as if fully stated.

Section 2 - That the Urban County Council of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government hereby supports and encourages the establishment of the Forest Health Research and Education Center at the University of Kentucky, for the expansion of critical research and educational programming and to address increased threats from invasive pests and pathogens on trees and forests throughout the region.

Section 3 – That the Clerk of the Urban County Council is hereby authorized and directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the University of Kentucky, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Southern Research Station, and the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

Section 4 - That this Resolution shall become effective on the date of its passage.

PASSED URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL:

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MAYOR

ATTEST:

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CLERK OF URBAN COUNTY COUNCIL