

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

RESOLUTION NO. 184

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION ZAP AND ENCOURAGING
EAST PROVIDENCE RESIDENTS TO JOIN THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF OPERATION ZAP**

WHEREAS, *Operation ZAP* was organized in 1972; and

WHEREAS, *Operation ZAP* began the environmental movement in the Blackstone River Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Blackstone River became the first industrialized river and first polluted riverway in the Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, Samuel Slater, on the Blackstone River in 1790, launched *the American Industrial Revolution*, and initiated economic freedom for the United States; and

WHEREAS, the use of the Blackstone River's waterpower offered the strength needed to power hundreds of textile mills along its 48 mile length; and

WHEREAS, these mills employed thousands of people that arrived from all over the world in search of their *American Dream*; and

WHEREAS, while this economic opportunity catapulted the Blackstone Valley businesses into a world economy for almost 200 years, it also left a legacy of environmental degradation; and

WHEREAS, this environmental condition has denied ten generations the use of the Blackstone River for drinking, swimming or eating its aquatic life; and

WHEREAS, the landscape along the Blackstone River has taken over five decades to attempt to bring back to health; and

WHEREAS, the mission of *Operation ZAP* in 1972 was to clean the Blackstone River making it possible for future generations to enjoy living along a clean river way; and

WHEREAS, *Operation ZAP* coincided with the founding of *Earth Day* and in the United States Congress' passage of the *Clean Air* and *Clean Water Acts*, and the founding of *Save the Bay*, which is dedicated to protecting and improving our Narragansett Bay and all the waters that flow into it; and

WHEREAS, *Operation ZAP* was conceived and organized by David M. Rosser of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the then President of the *Blackstone River Watershed Association*; and

WHEREAS, on September 9, 1972 Mr. Rosser, with the help of hundreds of community leaders and businesses, organized more than 10,000 people to remove tons of refuse from the banks of the Blackstone River and begin the creation of riverfront parks; and

WHEREAS, since that time the Blackstone River has seen millions of dollars of federal, state and local money spent on continuing the clean-up efforts; and

WHEREAS, since that time the Blackstone River has become cleaner for fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council* is organizing an effort, with dozens of local volunteer groups and individuals, with the goal of organizing 10,001 people, to celebrate the people and groups that have helped clean the Blackstone River; and

WHEREAS, dozens of people have worked to develop a Blackstone River Watershed Needs Assessment that points to a future where residents will be able to eat the fish, drink the water and swim in the Blackstone River; and

WHEREAS, it is time to be a part of this environmental movement, this time Blackstone River Watershed-wide, to clean up and green up the 25 Blackstone River Watershed communities from Worcester, Massachusetts to Providence, Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, the David Rosser family is working with the local organizers of ZAP50 to insure the environmental legacy is continued; and

WHEREAS, this will be a time to celebrate the people who worked on *Operation ZAP* in 1972 and the organizations and people who continue the work to bring the Blackstone River back to health.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of East Providence joins ZAP 50, to be with the 10,001 people that will assemble on August 27, 2022 to clean the Watershed and will assemble again on September 10, 2022 at the Old Slater Mill National Historic Site in Pawtucket, the base camp of Dave Rosser's headquarters for Operation ZAP in 1972 to celebrate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of East Providence commits its leadership, necessary resources, and participation to assist in mobilizing its citizens to "turn out" to join the 50th Anniversary of Operation ZAP. We call upon all to honor the work performed in 1972, honor the groups and agencies for the past and current ongoing efforts, and ensure that the Operation ZAP of 1972 goals are realized.

This Resolution shall take effect upon passage.

Adopted by the City Council: January 18, 2022

Attest:

Leah Stoddard Deputy City Clerk
City Clerk of East Providence, Rhode Island

Introduced by: Council President Britto