RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the Austin Youth River Watch (AYRW) Program was created in the early 1990s to mentor high school students in both personal accountability and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, AYRW teaches students to collect and track water quality data while also learning leadership skills and being encouraged to stay in school; and

WHEREAS, the data collected by AYRW is used by the city to keep track of pollutant levels in creeks and rivers and is used by the Lower Colorado River Authority to monitor water quality in Austin's rivers; and

WHEREAS, AYRW has nearly a 100% high school graduation rate for the 115 students per year from 10 area schools that participate in the program; and

WHEREAS, AYRW is so popular that it currently has a waiting list for participation; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this high demand, AYRW is planning to double the number of students it serves this year, as well as expand its program to include long-term stream improvement projects; and

WHEREAS, the AYRW program has been funded in large part by the Austin Water Utility (AWU) since its incarnation; and

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WHEREAS, AWU is currently facing extreme financial challenges as a result of the drought and is proposing severe budget cuts as a result; and

WHEREAS, AYRW funding is proposed to be eliminated in the FY2015 AWU budget; and

WHEREAS, AYRW has increasingly received funding from sources other than the AWU over the last four years, but is not able to bear the loss of this funding entirely and continue to operate the program uninterrupted; and

WHEREAS, there could be opportunities elsewhere in the City of Austin's budget to offer AYRW decreasing amounts of funding over the next three years so that they can find other funding to fill the gap left by the AWU; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to explore options for funding for the Austin Youth River Watch Program and report them to Council as part of ongoing budget discussions.

ADOPTED: _____, 2014 **ATTEST:** _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

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