

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-218

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 7, 2024

To recognize, honor, and celebrate the Red-backed Salamander, *Plethodon cinereus*, and other amphibians that call the District of Columbia home, and declare May 5 to May 11, 2024 “Amphibian Week” in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, May 5 to May 11, 2024 is National Amphibian Week;

WHEREAS, amphibians are unique because they begin their lives in the water, but live most of the rest of their lives on land. Amphibians are also ectothermic, or “cold blooded,” meaning they cannot regulate their own body temperature and rely on external sources of heat, like a rock warmed by the sun or a body of water;

WHEREAS, salamanders are a scientific order of amphibians;

WHEREAS, the Red-backed Salamander, *Plethodon cinereus*, is a species of salamander found throughout the Eastern and Appalachian regions of the United States, including in the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders are native to the District of Columbia and can be found in just about every wooded area within its boundaries;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders eat bugs which helps control pests and maintain the balance of the ecosystem;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders contribute to nutrient cycling by consuming organic matter and releasing nutrients back into the soil through their waste, which helps maintain soil fertility and supports the growth of plants in the forest;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders are important food for snakes, birds, and mammals;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamander burrows provide shelter for a variety of small animals, including insects, spiders, and other invertebrates;

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WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders' presence and the abundance of Red-backed Salamanders are indicators of healthy and mature eastern forest ecosystems;

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders collectively outweigh any other vertebrates in eastern forests (yes, even humans or deer!);

WHEREAS, Red-backed Salamanders' red stripes emulate the red horizontal bars on the District of Columbia's flag;

WHEREAS, the Red-backed Salamander has good friends at Powell Elementary School, who studied the Red-backed Salamander and proposed that the Council adopt the Red-backed Salamander as the official state amphibian of the District of Columbia.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "District of Columbia Amphibian Week Recognition Resolution of 2024".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia declares May 5 – May 11, 2024, "Amphibian Week" in the District of Columbia and hereby recognizes just how cool amphibians are and encourages everyone in the District to turn over a fallen log and search for a Red-backed Salamander.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.