

## RESOLUTION FOR THE MINUTES

A RESOLUTION honoring Thomas J. Fikslin, Ph.D. for his distinguished career in the application of science to improve water quality and water management in the Delaware River Basin and beyond.

WHEREAS, Dr. Fikslin's career has spanned nearly 50 years and has been marked by his high professional standards, determination, persistence, good nature, and unfaltering enthusiasm for solving complex problems; and

WHEREAS, for nineteen years before joining the Commission, Tom worked for Region 2 of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where his early work focused on the impacts of power plant discharges on aquatic life (1974-79) and where he later directed the toxicity testing and microbiology section of Region 2's laboratory in Edison, New Jersey (1979-86), eventually serving as the lab's Assistant Director (1986-89) and its Acting Director; and

WHEREAS, Tom came to DRBC in 1989 on a temporary assignment under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) to direct the development and implementation of an Estuary Toxics Management Strategy; and

WHEREAS, when Tom's initial IPA term expired, then-Executive Director Gerald Hansler secured its extension by two years, whereupon Tom joined the Commission as its Water Resources Manager to guide the development and adoption of water quality standards and implementing regulations for toxics in the Delaware River Estuary; and

WHEREAS, Tom earned his Ph.D. in ecology from Rutgers University in 1994, after earning his M.S. in biological sciences from the University of Delaware and his B.S. from Upsala College; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career Tom has been an educator, initially as a middle school science teacher; as an adjunct professor at Ocean County College since 1993; and over the past three decades, through sharing his scientific knowledge and experience with colleagues in and outside the Commission, as well as with interested stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, under a reorganization of the Commission's technical branches in 1998, Tom became chief of the Modeling and Monitoring Branch (later re-named Modeling, Monitoring and Assessment), and in 2016 was named the Commission's director of Science and Water Quality Management; and

WHEREAS, on the Commission's behalf, Tom assembled and led an exceptional team of scientists and engineers in the development of a complex model of the sources and fate of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the Delaware River Estuary and Bay, which was used to develop total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and to allocate those loads to multiple sources; and

WHEREAS, the work performed by Tom and his staff on PCBs has led to significant reductions in PCB discharges from point and nonpoint sources and to the easing of fish consumption advisories for fish caught in the Delaware River Estuary and Bay; and

WHEREAS, as the data continue to show substantial reductions in PCB loadings and improvements in the ambient Estuary water and fish tissue concentrations for PCBs, experts from diverse fields have recognized the DRBC's work on PCBs as groundbreaking; and

WHEREAS, other notable accomplishments of the Commission's Science and Water Quality Management Branch under Tom's leadership have included (but are by no means limited to):

- Expansion of the Commission's monitoring capabilities, with the addition of a sampling boat, new laboratory facilities and laboratory certifications;
- Addition of effects-based monitoring to the Commission's water quality management tools, including ambient chronic toxicity testing in the Estuary and its tributaries;
- Collection of data on contaminants of emerging concern, including ambient screening surveys and collection of fish tissue data;
- Development and application of sub-basin models to implement DRBC's Special Protection Waters program in the non-tidal river; and
- Collection of baseline data prior to the potential development of natural gas in the Upper Basin; and

WHEREAS, most recently, Tom has set his team on course to develop an Estuary eutrophication model that will help define new water quality goals for the Delaware Estuary and Bay and the next generation of water quality improvements to these important shared waters; and

WHEREAS, Tom has served as a respected advisor to numerous DRBC Commissioners and three Executive Directors; and

WHEREAS, Tom has always approached his DRBC responsibilities with enthusiasm and equanimity and has never forgotten to laugh, have fun and go sailing; and

WHEREAS, over the course of Tom's 29-year tenure with the DRBC, his staff became a cohesive team whose skill, mutual respect, and shared commitment ensure that the Commission's leadership in applying science to management of the Basin's shared water resources will continue; and

WHEREAS, Tom will officially retire from the DRBC on April 1, 2018 after 25 years (or 29, depending on how you count!); now, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Commissioners and staff extend their deepest appreciation to Dr. Thomas J. Fikslin for his outstanding service to the DRBC and the Basin, his skill, commitment, good humor, and friendship. We wish Tom and his wife Carol good health and much happiness as they embark on a well-earned retirement.

Adopted: March 14, 2018