ORDINANCE 2023-324

AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING CHAPTER 656 (ZONING 4 5 ORDINANCE CODE; AMENDING PART 12 CODE), 6 (LANDSCAPE AND TREE PROTECTION REGULATIONS), 7 SUBPART B (TREE PROTECTION), SECTION 656.1208 8 (ENFORCEMENT; VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES; 9 STOPPING WORK, CORRECTION OF VIOLATION), TO ADD SETTLEMENT POLICY CRITERIA 10 CREATE AND AUTHORIZING THE REDUCTION OF CERTAIN FINES 11 IMPOSED FOR VIOLATIONS OF PART 12 (LANDSCAPE 12 13 AND TREE PROTECTION REGULATIONS), SUBPART B, (TREE PROTECTION), DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE 14 15 MITIGATION PAYMENT AND THE FINE FOR TREE 16 REMOVAL WITHOUT A PERMIT, REPLACING THE PLANNING COMMISSION WITH THE TREE COMMISSION 17 18 AS THE APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR APPEALS OF NOTICES OF VIOLATIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF FINES 19 20 UNDER SUBPART B (TREE PROTECTION); PROVIDING 21 FOR CODIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS; PROVIDING AN 22 EFFECTIVE DATE.

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BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

25 Section 1. Amending Section 656.1208 (Enforcement; 26 violations and penalties; stopping work, correction of violation), 27 (Tree Protection), Part 12 (Landscape and Subpart B. Tree 28 Protection Regulations), Chapter 656 (Zoning Code), Ordinance Code. Section 656.1208 (Enforcement; violations and penalties; stopping 29 30 work, correction of violation, Subpart B (Tree Protection), Part 12 (Landscape and Tree Protection Regulations), Chapter 656 (Zoning 31

1 Code), Ordinance Code, is hereby amended to read as follows: 2 CHAPTER 656 - ZONING CODE 3 PART 12. - LANDSCAPE AND TREE PROTECTION REGULATIONS 4 * * 5 SUBPART B. - TREE PROTECTION 6 7 * * * Sec. 656.1208. - Enforcement of this Subpart B; violations and 8 9 penalties; stopping work, correction of violation, settlement and 10 reduction of fines pursuant to Policy criteria; procedures. 11 Removal of trees without a permit, or more trees than 12 permitted, is a violation of this Subpart and shall be corrected. Notice of violations. Whenever the Chief has evidence 13 (a) 7that a violation of any provision of this Subpart has been or is 14 15 being committed, he or she shall issue a written Notice of Violation to or order upon the person or all persons responsible 16 17 for the violation, which may include, but not be limited to, the property owner, permit holder, and contractor (if known and if 18 19 different person(s) or entities) by personal service or certified 20 mail or, if these forms of service are ineffective, by posting a 21 copy in a conspicuous place on the premises where the violation has 22 occurred or is occurring. The notice shall describe briefly set 23 forth the general nature of the violation and specify the manner 24 and that the violation shall be corrected within 90 days from the 25 date of the Notice of Violation, which may be extended by the Chief 26 for good cause. 27 Stopping Wwork Order. Whenever, in the opinion of the (b) 28 Chief, by reason of a violation of any provision of this Subpart,

the continuance of work is contrary to the public welfare <u>or will</u> <u>make it more difficult to discern the diameter breast height</u> ("DBH") inches of protected tree removed, he the Chief shall order,

in writing, all further work <u>on the development site</u>, including but <u>not limited to clearing</u>, grubbing, grading, and cleaning up to be stopped and may require suspension of <u>all</u> <u>all</u> work <u>on the site</u> until the violation is corrected.

5 (c) Correction of violation when DBH inches removed is determinable. A violation of this Subpart, when the DBH inches 6 7 illegally removed is determinable shall be corrected as follows: 8 within 90 calendar days from the date of the Notice of Violation. 9 A fine shall be assessed, and the corrective action determined by 10 the Chief of Development Services ("Assessment of Fine and Corrective Action"). Correction of the violation shall include: 11 12 (1) payment of a fine; and (2) mitigation for the trees removed by planting replacement trees on the site. Fines may be reduced 13 pursuant to subsection (g) (Settlement and Reduction of Assessment 14 15 of Fines and Corrective Action pursuant to Policy criteria), below. 16 Fines are separate from Mitigation Payments.

(1) Calculation of the fine. The fine shall include:

- 18(i) Payment of double the permit fee that would have been19required had a permit been lawfully obtained prior to20commencing work. See Section 320.409(a)(15). This21portion of the fine is payable to the segregated22trust account of the City, pursuant to Section23320.409, Ordinance Code.
- 24 Payment into the Tree Protection and Related Expenses (ii) Trust Fund ("Tree Fund"), Section 111.760, Ordinance 25 26 Code. This portion of the fine shall be deposited 27 into the account or subfund into which mitigation 28 payments are made for Ordinance Code compliance pursuant to subsection 656.1206(g)(14), and 29 30 calculated as follows: (A) For the first violation of the property owner, 31

permit holder or contractor: a monetary amount shall be paid for the DBH inches removed, pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(g). If space is available on the site, and if approved by the Department, replacement trees may be planted in lieu of payment.

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- (B) For each subsequent violation by the property owner, permit holder, or contractor, the fine amount shall be twice the required amount for the DBH inches removed, pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(g). If space is available on the site, and if approved by the Department, replacement trees may be planted in lieu of payment.
 - (C) In the event the contractor responsible for the tree removal in violation of this Subpart is different than the property owner, in addition to the fines listed in subsection (1), above, the contractor shall also be subject to a civil penalty of \$1,000 for the first violation, \$2,000 for the second violation, and \$3,000 for every subsequent violation. Each parcel where the contractor conducts site clearing work without a permit shall be considered a separate violation.

(2) Calculation of the Mitigation.

(i) Correction of the violation also requires replacement of the trees illegally removed by the planting of new trees, credit trees, and/or transplanted trees ("Replacement Trees") as required and calculated by Section 656.1206(g), as mitigation.

(1) When there is work done without a permit, the property owner shall pay the permit fee due the City for the work, which permit fee shall be twice the amount of the regular permit fee specified in Section 320.409(a)(15) which would have been due had the permit been obtained prior to commencing work, and -bv replacing the protected trees removed without a permit with new planted trees, unprotected trees or transplanted trees. The total caliper inches of the replacement trees shall equal twice the amount of total caliper inches required to be planted, pursuant to Section 656.1206(h).

(ii) Prior to planting the Replacement Trees, the The property owner shall also submit a tree replanting plan to the Chief showing how the damage caused to the site by the violation will be mitigated. The replanting plan shall be subject to the review and approval of the Chief and the trees installed within the time limit stated on the permit Assessment of Fine and Corrective Action. Replacement Trees trees shall meet the requirements of Section 656.1206, except that the minimum caliper of all Replacement Trees replacement trees shall be four inches, and the plan shall meet the requirements of Section 656.1217 (Landscape and Irrigation system plans required). to the extent applicable; or (iii) If it is found by the Chief that it is impossible to

replace any required trees on the site, the Chief may allow a payment into the Tree Fund for the

required tree	es not replac	ed, so long as	the criteria
in subsectio	n 656.1206(e)	are also met	("Mitigation
Payment").			

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- (2) When there is no permit, the violator shall pay the 4 permit fee due the City for the work, which permit 5 6 fee shall be twice the amount of the regular permit 7 in Section 320.408(a)(15), which would specified 8 have been due had the permit been obtained prior to 9 commencing work, and by making a contribution to the Tree Protection and Related Expenses Trust Fund to 10 11 compensate for each replacement tree which is not 12 planted. The amount of such contribution shall ho 13 twice the required amount, pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(h)(14). For each 14 subsequent violation by the property owner, 15 the amount of such contribution shall be triple 16 17 required amount, pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(h)(14). 18
 - (3) When there has been a permit issued for the proposed work, any property owner who removes more caliper inches than the number of caliper inches approved in their permit as identified in the final landscape inspection is required to pay triple the required amount for those caliper inches that were not permitted pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(h)(14).

(3)4)-Correction of violation when DBH inches not determinable ("Clearcutting"). If the site has been cleared and the trees have been removed from the site so that the Chief is unable to determine with reasonable certainty the number of protected trees removed in violation of this

Subpart, the violation shall be corrected by making a 1 contribution to the Tree Protection and Related Expenses 2 3 Trust Fund equal to \$50,000 per acre, or fraction thereof per each acre, of land cleared (the "Clearcutting 4 5 Contribution Amount" "Contribution"). or The Clearcutting Contribution Amount, which fine shall be 6 7 assessed by the Chief and when collected, shall be 8 deposited into the account or subfund into which 9 mitigation payments are made for Ordinance Code 10 compliance pursuant to subsection 656.1206(g)(14). In 11 the event the Chief assesses such а Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine, the Chief shall provide the 12 following information in the Notice of Violation, 13 pursuant to subsection (a), to the property owner, permit 14 15 holder and/or contractor: the amount of acres presumed to be impacted by the site clearing without a permit, the 16 total Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine assessed, and 17 any other information or documents the Chief relied upon 18 Contribution 19 to calculate the fine ("preliminary 20 assessment of Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine"). 21 The property owner, permit holder and contractor shall 22 have the ability to appeal the preliminary assessment of 23 Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine as follows: 24 The property owner, permit holder and contractor (i) have has the burden of proving, through competent 25 26 and substantial evidence that the preliminary 27 assessment of Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine 28 should be reduced. The property owner, permit holder 29 and contractor shall have 30 days from the receipt Notice of Violation to dispute the 30 of the preliminary assessment of Contribution ("Notice of 31

Dispute of Clearcutting Contribution Amount" or "Notice of Dispute"). The Notice of Dispute of Clearcutting Contribution Amount notice of dispute shall be in writing and sent to the Chief via electronic mail and by either hand delivery or certified mail, and contain the following information (if applicable): competent and substantial evidence of the species of trees removed, the total caliper DBH inches removed, the application of any exception or exemption to the trees removed as provided for in this Part, and any other relevant information used to dispute the preliminary assessment of the Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine. All evidence relied upon to support the dispute, including expert analysis and geographical data, shall also be provided in the Notice of Dispute notice of dispute.

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- (ii) The Chief shall have 30 days to respond to the <u>Notice of Dispute</u> notice of dispute. The response shall be in writing and shall be sent to the property owner, or his agent, <u>permit holder and contractor</u> via electronic mail and either hand delivery or certified mail, and shall provide the <u>"Final Assessment of Clearcutting Contribution Amount" Fine</u> based on one of the following determinations:
- 27 (<u>A</u>+) <u>The the Chief rejects the basis for the Notice</u>
 28 <u>of Dispute notice of dispute</u> and applies the
 29 preliminary assessment of <u>Clearcutting</u>
 30 <u>Contribution Amount fine</u> as the Final
 31 Assessment of <u>Clearcutting Contribution</u>

1Amount. This decision is appealable to the2Tree Commission, not based upon the Policy3outlined in subsection (h), below, but rather4competent, substantial evidence brought5forward by the alleged violator about the6actual amount of protected tree DBH inches7removed without a permit. Fine; or (2)

(B) The the Chief accepts all or a portion of the <u>Notice of Dispute</u> notice of dispute and adjusts the preliminary assessment of the <u>Clearcutting</u> <u>Contribution Amount</u> fine, an explanation of the adjustment shall be provided.

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- (C) If When the Chief accepts all or a portion of the Notice of Dispute, notice of dispute, based on the finding that there were a certain amount of protected tree DBH inches removed without a permit, a fine shall be assessed. The the minimum fine contribution shall be \$5,000 for each acre plus a fine of twice the monetary contribution amount required for those caliper protected DBH inches that were determined by the Chief to have been removed and are required to be replaced pursuant to the formula described in Section 656.1206(g). Section 656.1206(h)(14).
- (iii) The property owner may appeal the Final Assessment of <u>Clearcutting Contribution Amount</u> Fine to the Planning <u>Tree</u> Commission pursuant to the provisions of <u>this</u> Section <u>and Section 94.106</u>, <u>Ordinance Code</u>. <u>This appeal is separate from the appeal available</u>

1 regarding the decision of the Director on the Request for Reduction of Fines pursuant to 2 3 subsection (g), below, but like that appeal, the decision of the Tree Commission shall be deemed the 4 5 final action of the City and shall be subjected to no further appeal. 656.135. For the purposes of this 6 7 subsection, the use of the term "Director" shall mean "Chief" and "written interpretation" shall mean 8 9 "Final Assessment of Fine" as such terms are used in Section 656.135. 10

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(iv) In the event the property owner, permit holder or <u>contractor</u> does not dispute the preliminary assessment of <u>Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine</u> within the 30 days as provided for in <u>subparagraph</u> <u>(1)</u>, <u>above</u>, <u>subparagraph</u> <u>(i)</u>, the preliminary assessment of <u>Clearcutting Contribution Amount fine</u> shall be the Final Assessment of <u>Clearcutting</u> <u>Contribution Amount</u> Fine and shall be deemed the final action of the <u>City</u> city and shall be subjected to no further appeal.

21 (d) Final Action for Assessment of Fine and Corrective 22 Action. In the event the property owner, permit holder or 23 contractor does not dispute the Assessment of Fine and Corrective 24 Action within 30 days as provided for in subsection (g) below 25 (Settlement and Reduction of Assessment of Fines and Corrective 26 Action pursuant to Policy criteria), the Assessment of Fines and 27 Corrective Action shall be the final action of the City and 28 subjected to no further appeal.

29 (5) In the event the contractor responsible for the site
 30 clearing in violation of this subpart is different than
 31 the property owner, in addition to the penalties listed

1 in subparagraphs (2) and (3), above, the contractor shall correct the violation by making a contribution to the 2 Tree Protection and Related Expenses Trust Fund 3 to 4 compensate for each replacement tree which is not 5 planted and also be subject to a fine assessed penalty of \$1,000.00 for the first violation, 6 7 \$2,000.00 for the -second violation, and \$3,000.00 every subsequent violation. Each parcel where 8 the 9 contractor conducts site clearing work without a permit 10 shall be considered a separate violation.

11 Payment of Fine. The Final Assessment (e)(6) of 12 Clearcutting Contribution Amount and the contribution assessed under Assessment of Fine and Corrective Action imposed pursuant to 13 this subsection shall be payable to the Tax Collector within seven 14 15 days after the non-appealable Final Order is issued or the date the 16 Final Assessment of Clearcutting Contribution Amount or Fine and 17 Corrective Action becomes a Final Order as outlined above. All amounts received by the City pursuant to this Subpart subsection 18 19 shall be deposited into the Ordinance Code subfund of the Tree 20 Protection and Related Expenses Trust Fund established under Section 111.760, except that the 21 Building and Inspection 22 Development Services Division shall receive up to \$1,000 per acre 23 for the enforcement of this subsection and other than the permit 24 fee described in subsection 656.1208(c)(1)(A). No work shall continue on the site, and no further permits approved, until, as 25 determined by the Director, one or a combination of the following 26 27 occurs:

28 (1) <u>T</u>the tree replanting plan has been approved,

- 29 <u>(2)</u> or the contribution The Replacement Trees have been 30 planted, or
- 31 (3) The fine has been collected, or

1	(4) The Clearcutting Contribution Amount has been collected.
2	(d) Appeals. A person aggrieved by an administrative order,
3	determination or decision of the Chief may appeal the
4	order, determination or decision to the <u>Tree Commission</u>
5	Planning Commission pursuant to the provisions of Section
6	<u>94.106</u> 656.135.
7	(e) Violation and penalties. A person who violates any
8	provision of this Subpart and fails to correct the
9	violation as provided herein shall, upon conviction
10	thereof, be guilty of a class D offense and punished
11	accordingly. A separate offense shall be deemed to have
12	been committed for each tree removed, damaged or
13	destroyed contrary to the provisions of this Subpart.
14	(f) Judicial remedy. In addition to other remedies and
15	notwithstanding the existence of an adequate remedy at
16	law, the City of Jacksonville may seek injunctive relief
17	in the Circuit Court to enforce the provisions of this
18	Subpart. The City shall be entitled to reasonable
19	attorney's fees and costs, including appellate fees and
20	costs in an action where the City is successful in
21	obtaining affirmative relief.
22	(f) Settlement and Reduction of Assessment of Fines and
23	Corrective Action for violations when DBH inches removed is
24	determinable, pursuant to Policy criteria. The Director is

31 determination on whether to settle fines for less than face value

authorized to review and approve written requests by an affected

property owner, permit holder or contractor for settlement and

reduction of fines ("Request to Reduce Fines") calculated and

imposed by the Chief as stated in the Notice of Violation. Only the

fines may be reduced, not the required amount of Replacement Trees,

or their monetary equivalent. The Director shall make the

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1	of the Notice of Violation upon the submission of a Request to
2	Reduce Fines. Approval of a Request to Reduce Fines shall be based
3	on the policy outlined in subsection 656.1208(h)(2), below (the
4	"Policy"). The Policy shall remain in effect unless and until
5	revised by the Council.
6	(g) Procedure to request that a fine imposed pursuant to
7	subsection 656.1208(c) be settled and reduced ("Request to Reduce
8	Fines"); conditions and criteria.
9	(1) The owner of real property against which a fine has been
10	imposed by the Chief pursuant to Section 656.1208(c)
11	(Correction of violation when DBH inches removed is
12	determinable) may apply to the Planning and Development
13	Department, through the Development Services Division,
14	for a settlement and reduction of a fine with less than
15	full payment thereof within 30 days of issuance of the
16	Assessment of Fine and Corrective Action. The Chief of
17	Development Services Division is authorized to establish
18	the forms and procedures necessary for an application to
19	be considered. No such application shall be forwarded to
20	the Director for consideration hereunder until the
21	applicant has paid in full all ad valorem property taxes,
22	special assessments, city utility charges and other
23	government-imposed liens against the subject property.
24	(2) The Policy. The Director shall utilize the following
25	criteria in making all determinations whether to approve
26	or deny a Request to Reduce Fines imposed pursuant to
27	subsection 656.1208(c). The determinations shall be in
28	writing and shall explain why the actions of the
29	purported violator either meet or do not meet these
30	<u>criteria.</u>
31	As a threshold issue, the Director shall determine

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1	whether evidence exists that the failure to adhere to
2	this Part 12 was intentional. If the Director determines
3	that the failure to adhere to this Part 12 is
4	intentional, then the Request to Reduce Fines shall be
5	denied. If the Director determines that the failure to
6	adhere to this part 12 was an honest mistake or
7	unintentional, the following criteria shall be applied on
8	a percentage basis to reduce the fine. This metric is
9	designed so that the adjusted fine will never be less
10	than 10% of the original fine.
11	(i) Violator's knowledge of the requirements of Subpart
12	B of the Landscape Code.
13	(A) Five percent (5%) reduction if the violation was
14	caused at least 5 years ago by a previous owner
15	without the knowledge of the current owner; or
16	(B) Ten percent (10%) reduction if the violation was
17	caused by an owner, permit holder or contractor
18	with no previous experience with City permitting
19	or the Landscape Code.
20	(ii) Status of Permit.
21	(A) If Civil Plans required for the development:
22	(1) Zero percent (0%) reduction if no record of
23	permit or discussions with permittee;
24	(2) Five percent (5%) reduction if Civil Plans
25	submitted, but not reviewed;
26	(3) Ten percent (10%) reduction if Civil Plans
27	approved, but no site work permit
28	application submitted;
29	(4) Fifteen percent (15%) reduction if Civil
30	Plans approved but site work permit still
31	under review; or
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1	(5) Twenty percent (20%) reduction if Civil
2	Plans approved and site work permit approved
3	but pending payment.
4	(B) If Civil Plans are not required for the
5	development:
6	(1) Zero percent (0%) reduction if no record of
7	permit or discussions with permittee;
8	(2) Five percent (5%) reduction if site work
9	permit application submitted and returned
10	for corrections;
11	(3) Ten percent (10%) reduction if site work
12	permit application in review, but not
13	approved;
14	(4) Fifteen percent (15%) reduction if site work
15	permit application revised and resubmitted,
16	but not approved; or
17	(5) Twenty percent (20%) reduction if permit was
18	reviewed and approved, but is pending
19	payment by permittee.
20	(iii) Amount of tree canopy lost in DBH inches per acre
21	without a permit.
22	(A) Zero percent (0%) reduction if greater than
23	1,200 DBH inches;
24	(B) Five percent (5%) reduction if 865 to 1,200
25	DBH inches;
26	(C) Ten percent (10%) if 289 to 864 DBH inches;
27	(D) Fifteen percent (15%) if 24 to 288 DBH inches;
28	or
29	(E) Twenty percent (20%) reduction if less than 24
30	DBH inches removed.
31	(iv) Violator's cooperation to provide information and

1	willingness to resolve the issue.
2	(A) Zero percent (0%) if the Owner did not offer
3	any assistance in the investigation;
4	(B) Ten percent (10%) if the Owner was moderately
5	cooperative in the investigation;
6	(C) Twenty percent (20%) if the Owner was fully
7	cooperative with the investigation.
8	(v) Comparison of the fine to the assessed property
9	value.
10	(A) Zero percent (0%) if 0 to 20% of property
11	value;
12	(B) Five percent (5%) if 21 to 40% of property
13	value;
14	(C) Ten percent (10%) if 41 to 60% of property
15	value;
16	(D) Fifteen percent (15%) if 61 to 80% of property
17	value; or
18	(E) Twenty percent (20%) if over 81% of property
19	value.(3) Any fine, or reduced fine, imposed
20	pursuant to this Section shall be paid into
21	the Tree Protection and Related Expenses Trust
22	Fund (Section 111.760) and shall be deposited
23	into the account or subfund into which
24	mitigation payments are also made for
25	Ordinance Code compliance pursuant to
26	subsection 656.1206(g)(14).
27	(h) Appeal to the Jacksonville Tree Commission. Any violator
28	may appeal a decision by the Director on a Request for Reduction of
29	Fines, or a decision of the Chief regarding the Final Assessment of
30	Clearcutting Contribution Amount to the Jacksonville Tree
31	Commission pursuant to Section 94.106, Ordinance Code.
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(i) Violation and penalties. A person who violates any provision of this Subpart and fails to correct the violation as provided herein shall, upon conviction thereof, be guilty of a class D offense and punished accordingly. A separate offense shall be deemed to have been committed for each tree removed, damaged or destroyed contrary to the provisions of this Subpart.

7 <u>(j)</u> Judicial remedy. In addition to other remedies and 8 notwithstanding the existence of an adequate remedy at law, the 9 <u>City of Jacksonville may seek injunctive relief in the Circuit</u> 10 <u>Court to enforce the provisions of this Subpart. The City shall be</u> 11 <u>entitled to reasonable attorney's fees and costs, including</u> 12 <u>appellate fees and costs in an action where the City is successful</u> 13 in obtaining affirmative relief.

Codification Instructions. The Codifier 14 Section 2. and the Office of General Counsel are authorized to make all chapter 15 and division "tables of contents" consistent with the changes set 16 17 forth herein. Such editorial changes and any others necessary to make the Ordinance Code consistent with the intent of this 18 19 legislation are approved and directed herein, and changes to the 20 Ordinance Code shall be made forthwith and when inconsistencies are 21 discovered.

22 Section 3. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall become 23 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective 24 without the Mayor's signature.

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26 Form Approved:

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/s/ Susan Grandin

29 Office of General Counsel

30 Legislation prepared by: Cherry S. Pollock and Susan Grandin

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