

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-17**

**A RESOLUTION DEFERRING INITIATIVE NO. 2023-01 WHICH CONCERNS  
RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE TO THE VOTERS**

**WHEREAS**, a sufficient number of qualified electors of the City of Bellingham have proposed an initiative bill, previously assigned number 2023-01, which would establish a city minimum wage above the state minimum wage; and

**WHEREAS**, initiative bill no. 2023-01 would establish a City minimum wage that is \$1.00 above the State minimum wage on May 1, 2024, increasing to \$2.00 above the State minimum wage on May 1, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the bill would also prohibit retaliation by employers against employees; establish a private right of action for employees; give the City access to work sites and records; and allow the City to issue civil infractions and order injunctive relief including reinstatement, restitution, and payment of back wages; and

**WHEREAS**, the Charter and the Bellingham Municipal Code provide that City Council may enact the initiative bill, reject the initiative bill, reject the initiative bill and propose another bill dealing with the same subject, defer the initiative bill to the voters, or take no action on the initiative bill; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council considered Initiative No. 2023-01 during a regularly scheduled meeting on July 10, 2023, and moved to defer the bill to the voters in November; and

**WHEREAS**, RCW 29A.04.330 requires that the City Council pass a resolution requesting that the Whatcom County Auditor, as ex officio supervisor of elections, place Initiative No. 2023-01 on the November 7, 2023, ballot on or before the day of the primary election, i.e., August 1, 2023; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:**

The City Council hereby defers Initiative No. 2023-01 which concerns raising the minimum wage to the voters.

The Finance Director or designee shall promptly deliver a copy of this resolution to the Whatcom County Auditor requesting that Initiative No. 2023-01 be submitted to the qualified electors of the City for approval or rejection at an election to be held on November 7, 2023, pursuant to the City Charter and the Bellingham Municipal Code.

City staff is authorized to take additional actions that may be required by the County Auditor to ensure that this measure is placed on the ballot in November.

**PASSED** by the Council this 24th day of July, 2023.

  
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Council President

**APPROVED** by me this 26<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Director

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of the City Attorney