

## **Exhibit 6**

DECLARATION OF ROB MEYER

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I hereby declare as follows:

1. My name is Rob Meyer. I was born in 1954. I majored in Economics at Augsburg College in Minnesota, and I received an MBA in Business Economics from the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. I spent most of my career in Minnesota and have lived in the Twin Cities since 1980.

2. Throughout my life, I have involved myself in environmental issues and have donated to a variety of environmental organizations including The Center for Biological Diversity, Negative Population Growth, The Trust for Public Land, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, National Resources Defense Council, The Minnesota Land Trust, and others. I have also volunteered in local land stewardship initiatives.

3. In the 1970's, several sources predicted the population of the United States would eventually stabilize at 260 Million people. Notwithstanding, the population continued to climb, and I scratched my head in confusion as I watched it soar past 300 million. It was not until a few years later that I discovered that immigration was the main variable in Minnesota's population growth when several local newspaper stories pointed out that fact. The Minnesota state government openly admits this. The state demographer's office stated, "with deaths projected to outnumber births in 2040, international migration is going to continue to be crucial for population growth in Minnesota."<sup>1</sup> Since reading those newspaper stories and performing

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<sup>1</sup> Minnesota State Demographic Center, *Immigration Fueling Minnesota's Population Growth*, (May 8, 2017), <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/news/ada-to-zumbrota-blog/?id=36-291406>

subsequent research, I have watched increased population growth (led by immigration) negatively impact my environmental surroundings and quality of life.

4. I have been concerned with human population growth since middle school. Since the mid 1950's, my family has owned a lakeshore cabin in Northwest Wisconsin. By the mid-1970's, cabins were being built in the *middle of the woods*, not just on lakeshore, as was not previously the case. This is leading to a phenomenon called "forest fragmentation," which the USDA defines as "the splitting or isolating of patches of similar habitat;" the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources also points that out permanent structures and roads have a deleterious effect on wildlife, not to mention the ambiance of the forest.<sup>2</sup> Open spaces ripe for bird and animal watching are evaporating; areas where we could camp as children are paved over. Nowadays, virtually all lakeshore on Minnesota and Wisconsin lakes has been built up, and often, cabins are built on the *non-lakeshore* side of roads circling lakes. My children are not able to connect with nature nearly as easily or frequently as my generation.

5. The quality of my life as a Minnesotan has directly and specifically been impacted by the population growth, largely in part due to immigration.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the build out of suburbs on the east side of the Metro Area of Minneapolis-Saint Paul has been remarkable over the past decades. The growth has markedly detracted from my enjoyment of the St. Croix River Valley. The bare pastureland I drove by on the way to high school in the early 1970's has been replaced by major shopping centers and endless single-family houses interlaced with multistory apartments and townhomes. Moreover, the St Croix River—a designated National Scenic

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<sup>2</sup> Minnesota State Demographic Center, *Forest Legacy Project*, <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestlegacy/fragmentation.html>

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota State Demographic Center, *Immigration Fueling Minnesota's Population Growth*, (May 8, 2017), <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/news/ada-to-zumbrota-blog/?id=36-291406>

Riverway—has always been special to me and millions of others. I have boated on the St. Croix many times and consider it part of my heritage, along with the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. It has become progressively more crowded with boats and beach “parties” every year. This is also true for the Mississippi River, especially on the sand beaches in Pools 2 and 4 where we have done most of our boating. My connection to the waterways is real and the increase in population due to immigration has distinctively hurt me and reduced the quality of my recreation opportunities and enjoyment of interstate waterways.

6. As is well known in Minnesota, lake activities and boating are a large part of recreation and culture. Unfortunately, population growth has impaired boating in many places: the increase in population has increased the demand for food, in response, more farmland is tilled out to be put into crop production, and more sediment ends up being washed into streams and lakes. This has led to lower visibility of potential water-borne boating hazards, clogging of boaters’ cooling vents, shallowing of waterways, and rapid sandbar formation. These are all safety hazard to boaters and growing impediments to the area’s many boaters, including myself.<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, I was completely grounded on a newly formed sandbar at the south end of Lake Pepin, a named section of the Mississippi River across from Lake City, Minnesota. My family had to jump out in ankle deep water and push/float off the sand bar. It was not like this before the increase in population due, at least partially, to immigration.

7. Another impact of increased population is the marked increase in traffic volume, notably in the Twin Cities. When I moved there in 1980, traffic levels and congestion were nowhere

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<sup>4</sup> Pam Louwagle, *Shallower Lake Pepin is Call to Action to Deal with Sediment Buildup*, STAR TRIBUNE, (May 26, 2018), <http://www.startribune.com/shallower-lake-pepin-is-call-to-action-to-deal-with-sediment-buildup/483746011/>

where they are now. Presently, I lose hours a week in traffic that is a direct result of population growth. Over the last 12 years, my workday commute has increased by twenty to thirty minutes per day. This is forfeited time that I could spend working or with loved ones. Public transit, moreover, provides little relief. The State and Federal government spent \$957M on the Green Line and \$715M on the Blue Line light rail systems in Minnesota. Even with very high utilization of these rail lines, automobile traffic seems as congested as before the project, if not more so, even during what used to be “non-rush” hours. These changes cause me, and I assume anyone driving, duress on a weekly, if not daily basis. This is lost income, decreased quality of life, and clear impediment to free locomotion.

8. Immigration-led population growth has also threatened some of my favorite animals to watch in the wild and biodiversity. In early January of what I believe it was 2004, my family and I were on the way to cross country ski at Golden Eagle Lodge on the Gunflint Trail in Northern Minnesota. At a bend in the road, we came to a complete stop. A full-grown moose cow was down on her front knees licking the roadway. She was lapping up salt used to melt ice. We sat and watched this powerful, majestic creature it rose and slowly ambled away. It is hard to describe the up-close encounter of a moose in the wild; it is a combination of wonder, respect, and delight. These are powerful and enormous creatures. However, now the total Moose population is greatly threatened in Minnesota. According to Center for Biodiversity in 2016, Moose were heading for Endangered Species Act Protection.<sup>5</sup> I find it disturbing that this great creature, a rugged symbol of North American biodiversity, is endangered. As my 2004 encounter suggested, continued development and population expansion is encroaching on these

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<sup>5</sup> Press Release from Center for Biological Diversity, *Midwest Moose Move Towards Endangered Species Act Protection*, (Jun. 2, 2016), [https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press\\_releases/2016/moose-06-02-2016.html](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2016/moose-06-02-2016.html)

animals' territory and affecting their way of life, and that is lessening my ability to continue to enjoyment.

9. I am aware of NEPA and how it was designed to promote environmentally-informed decision making and to public participation in federal agencies' actions. However, I was irritated when I first learned of NEPA, as it was clear that governmental agencies were not fully considering human population growth in their decision making. For instance, development in the scenic Northwoods of Minnesota and Wisconsin (cabin country) and the endless suburban sprawl around the Twin Cities would undoubtedly be less if NEPA had been properly applied to population growth driven by immigration. In fact, according to a St. Paul Pioneer Press 2018 article, Minnesota has the *most* refugees per capita in the United States.<sup>6</sup> By this, the government continues to encourage unmitigated population growth while disregarding the clear environmental impacts which touch local wildlife, habitats, biodiversity, and citizens. I am confident that judicial encouragement of proper NEPA application would have a tremendously positive, crucial impact in Minnesota.

10. It is my understanding that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its component agency, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration services, have not performed *any* environmental review on the impact of immigration, even though it is clearly the lead agency under NEPA regulations for federal programs and policies regulating the entrance and citizenship under NEPA practice. The Refugee program has particularly affected the area where I live, and there was no NEPA analysis, not even a citation to a categorical exclusion, when the INS created the

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<sup>6</sup> Bob Shaw, *Minnesota Has the Most Refugees Per Capita in the U.S.*, TWIN CITIES PIONEER PRESS, (Jan. 13, 2018), <https://www.twincities.com/2018/01/13/the-not-so-welcome-mat-minnesota-winces-at-refugee-cutbacks/>

program in 1981.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the actions the government has taken since implementing the Refugee program are opaque and the citizens of Minnesota have no control over them. Refugees are settled in the area, who greatly impact the local community, and we don't have any of the details. This is exactly the kind of situation NEPA was specifically supposed to prevent.

11. How can NEPA, which specifically recognized the “profound impact of man's activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization...” not be applied at any level to these changes brought about by U.S. government agency? The profound changes to the natural and human environment impacting my life as result of population growth are enormous over 40 years. If NEPA had been applied properly to immigration programs, such as refugee programs, the areas that I live and enjoy nature in might not look as they do today. NEPA needs to be applied, as intended, to immigration-related population growth. The lack of any framework to analyze immigration related impacts in these agencies according to NEPA rules is currently enabling the Biden Administration to open the spigot on the flow of immigrants into this country, deliberately fueling population growth without even telling the public any of the details. This is a gross and historic oversight and must not be allowed to continue.

12. My consul tells me that since the Biden Administration has taken over, Joe Biden has promised to open the borders and increase immigration in every way possible. I am alarmed to learn that he has taken so many unilateral actions without any NEPA analysis. As soon as he got in office, he instituted a host of policies that make it easier to enter, such as resuming catch and release, ending the Remain in Mexico Policy, stopping border construction of the wall in the

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<sup>7</sup> 46 Fed. Reg. 45118 (Sept. 10, 1981).

middle. Even though I am not in favor of building the wall, the cumulative impact of these recent actions is having a large impact on wildlife in the country!

13. Furthermore, my counsel tells me that after first refusing to raise the refugee ceiling, the Biden Administration ultimately quadrupled it this year. It would seem the ceiling will only increase while the Biden Administration is in charge of Federal agencies. Actions by the Department of State that carry out the refugee program in particular have a noticeable effect on my community, as so many refugees have settled in the Twin Cities and will continue to do so in ever greater numbers based on the ceiling being lifted. Not only is Minnesota the state with the most refugees resettled, but Minnesota is also the number one state in the nation for “secondary migration” – refugees moving to Minnesota after their initial resettlement elsewhere. It is so attractive because Minnesota has many social services available for refugees, including one of the most sophisticated health systems specializing in refugee health.<sup>8</sup> The population impacts of refugees are far greater than the mere numbers who settle. Refugees in the Twin Cities have historically brought in many more through chain migration. In addition, they have a much higher fertility rate than native Minnesotans. Therefore, the environmental impacts of this one program’s added population to my local community are, and will be, very palpable.

14. My counsel has informed me that Minnesota is historically home to a number of refugee resettlement non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, Catholic Charities of Mpls/St. Paul, Catholic Charities of Winona, the MN Council of Churches, the International Institute, and Arrive Ministries. These NGOS make private arrangements with the Department of State to determine how many refugees to resettle in my

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<sup>8</sup> Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, *Refugee Facts and Figures*, <https://www.lssmn.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/Refugee%20Facts%20and%20Figures-Updated%2002012018.pdf>, last accessed at August 23, 2021.



local community. A process like this is ideally suited for the kind of public transparency that NEPA is supposed to guarantee to citizens *before* their communities are transformed by public/private partnerships according to non-public contracts. But the process is frustratingly opaque.<sup>9</sup> If there were public transparency, there would be accountability, and perhaps local environments would not be transformed without our knowledge or consent. Behind the scenes, the Department of State has taken action to decide the criteria for being a part of the refugee program, and is awarding contracts that will determine how many people will be resettled in my community

15. I hereby declare under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this 28th day of August, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Meyer", written over a horizontal line.

Rob Meyer

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sctimes.com/story/opinion/2015/05/06/lack-clarity-complicates-refugee-resettlement/70897706/>