RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA, STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH UNITED STEELWORKERS LOCAL 7-1, CONDEMNING THE BP WHITING REFINERY LOCKOUT, AND OPPOSING ANY EFFORT TO DENY, TERMINATE, OR CLAW BACK UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FROM LOCKED-OUT WORKERS

WHEREAS, United Steelworkers Local 7-1 represents hundreds of skilled refinery workers at the BP Whiting Refinery, including men and women from East Chicago, Whiting, Hammond, and communities throughout Northwest Indiana; and

WHEREAS, these union members are highly trained workers who have dedicated years of labor, skill, and sacrifice to the safe and successful operation of the BP Whiting Refinery and to the economic strength of Northwest Indiana; and

WHEREAS, the members of USW Local 7-1 did not abandon their jobs, did not voluntarily walk away from their paychecks, and did not choose unemployment, but were instead locked out of their workplace by BP; and

WHEREAS, an employer-imposed lockout places an enormous financial burden on workers and their families by cutting off wages, threatening health and financial stability, and creating uncertainty for households that depend upon every paycheck; and

WHEREAS, no hardworking union member should be forced to choose between standing together for a fair collective bargaining agreement and being able to pay a mortgage, rent, utilities, groceries, medical expenses, and other basic necessities; and

WHEREAS, unemployment insurance exists to provide temporary economic protection to workers and families who lose access to wages, and workers who are locked out by their employer should not be treated as though they voluntarily chose to become unemployed; and

WHEREAS, efforts to deny unemployment benefits to locked-out workers, terminate benefits already being received, or force workers to repay benefits previously awarded would create an additional and unjust financial penalty against families who have already suffered the loss of their regular income; and

WHEREAS, forcing workers to repay unemployment benefits received in good faith would place families at risk of debt, foreclosure, eviction, utility shutoffs, food insecurity, and other serious financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, unemployment benefits should never be used as an economic weapon to pressure union members into abandoning their collective bargaining rights or accepting employment terms under financial duress; and

WHEREAS, collective bargaining is a fundamental part of the relationship between organized labor and employers, and workers must be free to stand together, negotiate together, and advocate for wages, benefits, safety, job security, and working conditions without being financially punished for doing so; and

WHEREAS, Northwest Indiana was built by generations of union workers who labored in our steel mills, refineries, railroads, manufacturing plants, construction trades, and other industries, often performing dangerous and demanding work to provide for their families and build stronger communities; and

WHEREAS, organized labor has played a vital role in establishing better wages, safer workplaces, health benefits, pensions, retirement security, and a stronger middle class for working families throughout our region; and

WHEREAS, the City of East Chicago proudly recognizes the contributions of organized labor and believes that an attack on the economic security of working families anywhere in Northwest Indiana affects the strength and stability of our entire region; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council believes that workers who are ready and willing to work but are prevented from doing so because of an employer-imposed lockout should not be financially punished by the State of Indiana; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council strongly rejects any attempt to make working families bear the financial consequences of a lockout that they did not initiate; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council believes that the State of Indiana should protect working families, not create additional financial hardship by denying unemployment compensation or demanding repayment from workers who relied upon benefits they were awarded; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council stands firmly behind the principle that every worker deserves dignity, respect, fair treatment, and the right to bargain collectively without fear that their family's economic survival will be used against them.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Common Council of the City of East Chicago hereby declares its strong support and solidarity with the members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1 and their families during the BP Whiting Refinery lockout.

SECTION 2. The Common Council condemns the continued lockout of USW Local 7-1 members and calls upon BP to end the lockout, return union employees to work, and engage in meaningful, good-faith collective bargaining toward a fair and equitable labor agreement.

SECTION 3. The Common Council strongly opposes any effort to deny or terminate unemployment benefits for workers who have been locked out of their jobs by their employer.

SECTION 4. The Common Council further strongly opposes any attempt to force USW Local 7-1 members or other locked-out workers to repay unemployment benefits that they received in good faith after filing claims with the State of Indiana.

SECTION 5. The Common Council declares that unemployment compensation should never be used as leverage against workers engaged in lawful collective bargaining and should never be manipulated in a manner that weakens the bargaining rights of organized labor.

SECTION 6. The Common Council calls upon the Governor of Indiana, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, and all appropriate state officials to protect unemployment benefits for workers subjected to an employer-initiated lockout and to reject efforts that would place additional financial burdens upon those workers and their families.

SECTION 7. The Common Council calls upon members of the Indiana General Assembly to take whatever legislative action may be necessary to make clear that workers locked out by their employers remain eligible for unemployment compensation and shall not be forced to repay benefits solely because of an employer-initiated labor dispute.

SECTION 8. The Common Council calls upon elected officials throughout Northwest Indiana to stand publicly with USW Local 7-1 and with all working families whose livelihoods depend upon fair wages, strong collective bargaining rights, and economic security.

SECTION 9. The Common Council recognizes that the strength of Northwest Indiana has always come from its workers and declares that the City of East Chicago will continue to stand with organized labor and defend the dignity and economic security of working men and women.

SECTION 10. The Clerk of the City of East Chicago is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to United Steelworkers Local 7-1, BP Whiting Refinery management, the Governor of Indiana, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Indiana General Assembly delegation representing Northwest Indiana, and other appropriate state and local officials.

SECTION 11. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval according to law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of East Chicago, Indiana, this _____ day of _____, 2026.

President, East Chicago Common Council

ATTEST: