

RESOLUTION
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MARIN COUNTY
PROCLAIMING
WORLD OCEANS DAY
JUNE 8, 2017

WHEREAS, December 2008 the United National General Assembly designated June 8, as "World Oceans Day" as a way to celebrate the world's shared ocean and personal connection to the sea, and to raise awareness about the crucial role oceans play in human lives and the important ways people can help protect them; and

WHEREAS, as oceanographer and former chief scientist of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Sylvia Earle, said, "You may never see the ocean, you may never touch the ocean, but the ocean touches you – with every breath you take, every drop of water you drink;" and

WHEREAS, the ocean is the origin of the planet's rainfall, the distributor of its heat, the arbiter of its climate, flows over nearly three-quarters of the planet, holds 97% of the planet's water, produces more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere, and absorbs the most carbon. Oceans are essential to food security and the health, and survival of all; and

WHEREAS, climate change is causing marked shifts in ocean environments and ecosystems, with dramatic consequences for marine communities, food webs, and species. Our oceans are in crisis, and while more remains to be understood, it is becoming increasingly urgent that we take action, for if we protect the oceans, we protect ourselves; and

WHEREAS, the ocean absorbs a third of the carbon dioxide that humans release into the atmosphere, which raises the water's acidity and harms sea creatures that are vital food sources for marine life. Rising levels of ocean acidity, along with warming waters, damage coral reefs, dissolve oyster shells and harm marine fisheries around the world; and

WHEREAS, the oceans have become 30% more acidic since scientists began taking measurements. The average acidity of the surface ocean is projected to double over pre-industrial levels by the end of this century. With large-scale oyster hatchery losses in 2007 and 2008, the West Coast has experienced some of the earliest and clearest impacts of increased acidification in local marine waters; and

WHEREAS, if emissions continue to rise unchecked, future risks are profound. Climate impacts may alter patterns and pathways of ocean circulation and mixing, melt polar ice caps, and cause mass extinctions of plants and animals; and

WHEREAS, almost the entire ocean surface is now polluted with plastic wastes. Eight million tons of plastic waste flow from the land to the ocean every year, and more than five trillion pieces of plastic, collectively weighing nearly 269,000 tons, are floating in the world's oceans, causing damage throughout the food chain. Thousands of seabirds and sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled in it; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Bay waters are a pollution "hot spot," with microplastics at concentrations greater than those of other urban water bodies studied in the United States, including the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay. Eight wastewater treatment facilities on the Bay discharge an estimated 5 million microplastic particles per day, primarily in the form of microfibers, according to a report released by the Center for Biological Diversity in May of 2017; and

WHEREAS, the life beneath the ocean surface is being hunted or fished to near-extinction. The number of whales, dolphins, sharks, rays and turtles has fallen by 75% and some species, such as oceanic whitetip sharks and the "common" skate, have been reduced by 99%; and

WHEREAS, effluent and runoff from small sources, like septic tanks, cars, trucks, and boats, and from larger sources, such as farms, ranches, and forests, makes its way to the ocean, polluting the marine environment. In the San Francisco Bay, leopard sharks are dying due to a rise in fungus likely resulting from treatment plant releases in the south bay waters; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2014 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the surface of the global ocean has warmed by about 1.7 degrees F since 1880. During the past three decades, approximately 70% of the world's coastal areas have experienced significant increases in sea-surface temperature; and

WHEREAS, the greatest ocean warming overall is occurring in the Southern Hemisphere and is contributing to the subsurface melting of Antarctic ice shelves. Since the 1990s the atmosphere in the Polar Regions has been warming at about twice the average rate of global warming. Reduced sea ice is affecting a wide range of species, while global warming is redistributing many marine species towards the poles; and

WHEREAS, warming also is affecting the salinity of the oceans, reducing the production of the phytoplankton upon which marine food webs depend, causing bacteria to dominate and harming marine fisheries. Huge sections of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, stretching across hundreds of miles of its most pristine northern section, were recently found to be dead, killed in 2016 by overheated seawater.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin to protect the health of the oceans and other natural systems on which the planet depends, we must work together to cut carbon emissions; reduce the flow of plastics, effluent, and runoff into the oceans; improve management and regulation of fisheries and aquaculture; enhance control of offshore hydrocarbon industries and offshore mining; and establish and maintain marine protected areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin hereby proclaims June 8, 2017, as "World Oceans Day" and urges all people of Marin to celebrate and protect our oceans by picking up litter, reducing the use of plastics, walking more and driving less, taking public transit, shifting to a plant-based diet, and supporting local, state, and national environmental organizations, and supporting the 2017 conservation action focus on plastic pollution prevention and youth engagement to raise awareness about how to protect our oceans.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held this 6th day of June 2017.

JUDY ARNOLD – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 5 - PRESIDENT

KATHRIN SEARS – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 3

DENNIS RODONI – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 4

