

RESOLUTION
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MARIN COUNTY

HONORING
SUPERVISOR KATHRIN SEARS
FOR A DECADE OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF MARIN COUNTY

WHEREAS, born in San Francisco and having grown up in the pastoral hillside hamlets of Mill Valley and Sausalito, Kathrin (Kate) Sears packed protest signs and her 1969 Tamalpais High School diploma and headed East to pursue adventure in the lofty halls of ivy-covered academia, earning multiple academic and professional degrees in the far flung disciplines of history, political science, Chinese studies, and the law; and

WHEREAS, Kate was lovingly raised, along with her brother Geoffrey, by two environmentalists: father, George Ames Sears, longtime Partner in the esteemed San Francisco law firm of Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro, and mother, Mary Ann Sears, beloved math teacher at Tamalpais High School and revered community leader. Kate returned home to Sausalito, continuing the family's legacy of law and community service, litigating for 16 years until joining the California Attorney General's Consumer Law Section, where, among other cases, she negotiated a multibillion dollar settlement with Countrywide for predatory lending and supervised legal teams investigating fraudulent conduct related to the financial crisis; and

WHEREAS, with the tragic and untimely death of beloved Marin County District Three Supervisor Charles F. McGlashan, Governor Jerry Brown reached through a crowded field of talented candidates to appoint Kate Sears, his former Supervising Deputy Attorney General, to cross the threshold of civic leadership. On June 21, 2011, with the clock running, Kate began a decade-long marathon, extended by elections in 2012 and 2016, mastering the intricacies of local government by navigating and negotiating complex and often controversial issues; and

WHEREAS, Kate came to public service with three vital leadership qualities for decision-making in uncertain and challenging times: she is direct, wants action now, and believes in seizing the moment to get things done. Kate prized unconventional ideas, new approaches, and smart but untested strategies. She championed "pilot projects" as a viable way to test hypotheses. With single-minded focus, Kate broke down silos in government and the private sector to bring people together to find common ground and develop collaborative, creative, and effective solutions; and

WHEREAS, Kate served on numerous county and regional boards and commissions, including the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District Board, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Governing Board, and the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency. She chaired the Board of MCE, California's first Community Choice Aggregator, guiding its growth from serving a few communities in Marin County to its present day service area encompassing Marin, Contra Costa, Napa, and Solano Counties, bringing renewable energy to hundreds of thousands of households and businesses, while providing a model of fiscally and socially responsible energy provision to communities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, early in her tenure, Kate set her sights on assuring Marin would step up to address the existential and ever-growing impacts posed by our changing climate. In 2013, Kate convened local residents and business leaders in the Southern Marin Sea Level Rise Committee to assess the shoreline's vulnerability to rising waters, culminating in a day-long, experiential community conversation in 2014 called "Living with Water," where residents played an early, table-top version of the now nationally recognized and awarded "Game of Floods"; and

WHEREAS, moved by the urgency of the climate challenge, Kate, along with her Board colleagues and legions of environmental advocates and organizations, pursued groundbreaking climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives in four signature Marin County programs: Drawdown: Marin, a community-driven campaign to dramatically reduce Marin’s greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and prepare for climate change impacts through the adoption of local solutions; BayWAVE, Marin County’s coordinated planning with cities and towns, through partnerships, education, and projects, to address sea level rise along the bay shoreline; C-SMART, the sea level rise planning effort focused on Marin’s coastline; and the Marin County Climate Action Plan (CAP), tracking government and community progress on meeting GHG reduction goals; and

WHEREAS, Kate’s most enduring quality is her deep love of and respect for the environment and all its creatures. Motivated by deep reverence for the earth and drawing on her knowledge as a litigator, Kate was instrumental in the County of Marin’s decision to pursue climate litigation against 57 oil and gas companies for the damages their products caused the environment, making Kate a much sought-after speaker at local and national environmental conferences; and

WHEREAS, Kate savored the depth and breadth of a County Supervisor’s work and her laughter resounded through the halls of “Big Pink.” As Board President in 2014 and in 2019, Kate featured monthly live performances by local musicians to inspire thoughtful decision-making at Board meetings. An enthusiastic supporter of the arts, Kate helped guide the adoption of Marin’s first Arts and Culture Master Plan, recognizing the central role the arts play in Marin’s prized quality of life. Seeing the strengths and growing demands of Marin’s aging population, Kate served as the Board of Supervisors’ liaison on issues of aging, promoting healthy, active lifestyles, and the County’s successful drive to create Age Friendly communities. As a member of the Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center Conservancy, Kate’s advice helped steward the Civic Center’s historic legacy; and

WHEREAS, in the midst of a pandemic revealing deep systemic inequities, the words Kate most commonly used to bring Marin together to vanquish anxiety and despair were these: community, acceptance, respect, integrity, kindness, compassion. Time and again, Kate, with piercing eyes through trademark purple spectacles, stared down hate and intolerance with a call to come together and repair what is broken in ourselves, our communities, and our country. A champion of equity and justice, Kate helped Marin County take steps toward becoming more diverse, equitable, and inclusive so that all people are seen, valued, respected, and belong.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin hereby expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Kate Sears for a decade of service to the people of Marin County and the residents of District Three, and for sharing her wisdom, wit, courage, fortitude, and resolve in helping set us on a path that has made Marin more just, equitable, and climate resilient, primed and ready to meet the demands of our changing world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin also wishes Kate many long and restful days ahead making possible the pursuit of her many retirement resolutions, including musical instruments to play, hikes to take, lakes and lagoons to explore, goals to set, and dreams to dream.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held this 15th day of December 2020.

KATIE RICE – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 2- PRESIDENT

DAMON CONNOLLY – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 1

DENNIS RODONI – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 4

JUDY ARNOLD – SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 5

