

**MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA
MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION NO. 413 -2019**

A RESOLUTION BY THE MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS URGING CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE THE CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT OF 2000; SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 2429 AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL 4160, THE RESTORING RESILIENT REEFS ACT OF 2019; DIRECTING THE CLERK TRANSMIT THE RESOLUTION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, from tourism to marine recreation and sport fishing, coral reefs are an important part of the State of Florida's ocean economy, and play a central role in the economies of Southeast Florida's communities, including the Florida Keys. NOAA suggests that coral reefs in southeast Florida have an asset value of \$8.5 billion, generating \$4.4 billion in local sales, \$2 billion in local income, and 70,400 full and part-time jobs; and

WHEREAS, coral reefs are a significant habit for fisheries. In the United States, about half of all federally managed fisheries depend on coral reefs. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service estimates the annual commercial value of U.S. fisheries from coral reefs to be over \$100 million. Reef-based recreational fisheries generate over \$100 million annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Reef Tract, nearly 360-miles long and 4-miles wide and stretching from the Dry Tortugas in Monroe County to Martin County is the world's third-largest barrier reef; and the only living coral reef in the continental United States; and

WHEREAS, coral reefs are vulnerable to harmful environmental changes, particularly those resulting from human activities. Coral cover has declined up to 80 percent over the past three decades. Southeast Florida's reefs are being monitored for diseases, bleaching, and other problems associated with human activities. Monitoring data from the Florida Keys revealed a 44 percent decline in coral cover from 1996-2005; and

WHEREAS, massive, region-wide bleaching events have become more common on the Florida Reef Tract. Since 1987, six extensive coral bleaching events have affected the entire tract. Substantial mass coral mortality occurred during the global bleaching events; and

WHEREAS, while Florida Reef Tract disease outbreaks are not unprecedented, the current disease event is unique due to its scale, high infection rate, and rapid spread; the number of coral species affected across such a large portion of the Florida Reef Tract, estimated to have resulted in the mortality of millions of corals; and

WHEREAS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that diseases and diminishing health condition among corals throughout the Florida Reef Tract have dramatically increased; and

WHEREAS, at the federal level there have been limited resources to address this disease outbreak and the overall health of coral reefs. Congress passed the Coral Reef Conservation Act in 2000, which authorized appropriations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for coral reef protection and management activities through 2004. Authorization for the overall program expired in 2004 but Congress has continued to fund the CRCP through the annual appropriations process; and

WHEREAS, Senator Marco Rubio introduced S.2429, entitled the Restoring Resilient Reefs Act of 2019, for consideration during the 116th Congress and whereas Congressman Darren Soto introduced H.R. 4160, similar to S. 2449; and

WHEREAS, the Restoring Resilient Reefs Act of 2019 provided a five-year authorization with an explicit focus on restoration activities where natural disasters and human activities have degraded reef ecosystems, and directs federal funding and technical assistance so states and impacted communities can drive priorities and management of coral reef ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, the Restoring Resilient Reefs Act of 2019 strengthens the federal response to coral reef emergencies including disease, bleaching, natural disasters, vessel grounds, and hazardous spills; and

WHEREAS, support for S. 2429 and H.R. 4160 is consistent with Monroe County's long history of championing protections for the Florida Reef Tract; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Monroe County urges Congress to pass S. 2429 and H.R. 4160, the Restoring Resilient Reef Act of 2019, and reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

Section 2. Direct the Clerk to transmit copies of this resolution to Senator Roger Wicker, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; to Representative Raul Grijalva, Chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources; and to the members of the Monroe County federal delegation: Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Rick Scott, and Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell.

Section 3. This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of Monroe County, Florida, at a regular meeting held on the 20th day of November, 2019.

Mayor Heather Carruthers	<u>Yes</u>
Mayor Pro Tem Michelle Coldiron	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Danny L. Kolhage	<u>Absent</u>
Commissioner David Rice	<u>Yes</u>
Commissioner Sylvia J. Murphy	<u>Yes</u>

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY

[Signature]

Mayor/Chair



ATTEST: KEVIN MADOK, CLERK

[Signature]

DEPUTY CLERK

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM:

[Signature]
ROBERT B. SHILLINGER, JR.
COUNTY ATTORNEY
Date 12/4/19

CLERK DIRECT
MONROE COUNTY, FL

2019 DEC -5 PM 1:27

FILED FOR RECORD