

RESOLUTION NO. 173 - 2018

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA SUPPORTING HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL 5996 (H.R. 5996) REAUTHORIZING AND AMENDING THE CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT OF 2000 TO STRENGTHEN THE FEDERAL ROLE IN CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND TO ENHANCE FEDERAL FUNDING AND RESOURCES TO STUDY AND PROTECT CORAL REEFS 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. 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 habitat 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 150-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, the Florida Keys portion of the Florida Reef Tract is recognized and protected by management plans of the National Marine Sanctuary, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges; and

WHEREAS, the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Tract comprising the northern portion, extending from Miami-Dade to Martin Counties, remains unprotected and without a State-adopted management plan addressing its future sustainability; and

WHEREAS, coral reefs are vulnerable to harmful environmental changes, particularly those resulting from human activities. Coral cover on many Caribbean reefs has declined up to 80 percent over the past three decades. Southeast Florida's reefs, which are a part of the greater Caribbean/ Western Atlantic reef province, 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 of 1997-1998 and 2014-2016; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program confirmed a significant disease event, occurring from 2014 to present, that has spread quickly and far. In the fall of 2014, isolated sites with significant coral disease were reported near Key Biscayne in Miami-Dade County and by fall 2015, widespread disease was confirmed across approximately 55 linear miles of reef, including locations as far north as Pompano Beach in Broward County and as far south as Biscayne National Park. Disease continued to spread north and south into the Florida Keys throughout 2016, and by summer of 2017 reports of widespread disease were confirmed as far north as St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County and to the southern boundary of the Upper Keys; and

WHEREAS, at the December 12, 2017 meeting of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Committee, it was reported that the Florida Reef Tract coral disease has reached the reefs off of Long Key; and

WHEREAS, Florida Reef Tract disease outbreaks are not unprecedented, this 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 and, among other activities, authorized the Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) to provide matching grants to states, territories, educational and non-governmental institutions, and fishery management councils for coral reef conservation projects. Authorization for the overall program expired in 2004 but Congress has continued to fund the CRCP through the annual appropriations process; and

WHEREAS, although funding for coral reef programs has remained stable, with the program receiving \$26 million for the past several fiscal years, it has not had the authorization or resources to help address the disease outbreak in Florida; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation includes the following:

- Reauthorizes and amends the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) coral reef program.
- Strengthens the federal response to coral reef emergencies and allowing NOAA to disburse grant funding on an expedited or emergency basis
- Expands federal grant making for local coral reef projects, community-based coral reef conservation planning, and scientific research on coral reef biodiversity, genetics, proration and resiliency.
- Provides Congressional authorization for the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, which includes relevant federal agencies, the states of Florida and Hawaii, and 5 U.S. territories (GU, CNMI, PR, AS, and USVI).
- Establishes a new Coral Reef Conservation Fund within the U.S. Treasury supported by offshore royalty revenue to provide dedicated funding for coral reef projects, at no expense to taxpayers.
- Minimizes damage to coral reefs from vessel groundings, anchors, boat moorings, ship strikes, and abandoned vessels by directing NOAA and other federal agencies to identify practicable steps to reduce vessel impacts and accidents that harm coral reefs.
- Protects at-risk coral reefs nationwide by directing NOAA to maintain an inventory of coral reefs most at risk from bleaching, disease/invasive species outbreaks, harmful algal blooms, and coastal pollution.
- Provides dedicated funding for coral reef conservation at no cost to taxpayers by requiring that all fines, penalties, and amounts recovered from damages to federally protected coral reefs to support conservation; and

WHEREAS, support for H.R. 5996 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. Endorses and supports HR 5996 reauthorizing and amending Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) coral reef program.

Section 2. Directs the Clerk to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to Members of the Monroe County federal delegation: Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Marco Rubio and Representative Carlos Curbelo.

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 June, 2018.

Mayor David Rice	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Sylvia Murphy	Yes
Commissioner Danny Kolhage	Yes
Commissioner George Neugent	Yes
Commissioner Heather Carruthers	Yes



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: *David Rice*
Mayor David Rice

ATTEST: KEVIN MADOK, CLERK

Kevin Madok

Deputy Clerk

MONROE COUNTY ATTORNEY
APPROVED AS TO FORM
Pedro J. Mercado
PEDRO J. MERCADO
ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
Date 6/12/18

FILED FOR RECORD

2018 JUN 25 PM 12:17

CLERK CIR. CT.
MONROE COUNTY, FL



Kevin Madok, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller – Monroe County, Florida

June 25, 2018

Honorable Senator Bill Nelson
716 Senate Hart Office Building
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Honorable Senator Nelson,

Attached is a certified copy of Resolution No. 173-2018 supporting House of Representatives Bill 5996 (H.R. 5996) reauthorizing and amending the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to strengthen the federal role in coral reef protection and to enhance federal funding and resources to study and protect coral reefs and providing an effective date.

This Resolution was adopted by the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners at a regular meeting, held in formal session, on June 20, 2018. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (305) 292-3550.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Madok, CPA, Clerk of the
Circuit Court and ex-officio to the
Monroe County Board of County
Commissioners

By: Pamela G. Hancock, D.C.

cc: File

KEY WEST
500 Whitehead Street
Key West, Florida 33040
305-294-4641

MARATHON
3117 Overseas Highway
Marathon, Florida 33050
305-289-6027

PLANTATION KEY
88820 Overseas Highway
Plantation Key, Florida 33070
305-852-7145

PK/ROTH BUILDING
50 High Point Road
Plantation Key, Florida 33070
305-852-7145



Kevin Madok, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller – Monroe County, Florida

June 25, 2018

Honorable Senator Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

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By: Pamela G. Hancock, D.C.

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Kevin Madok, CPA

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June 25, 2018

Honorable Representative Carlos Curbelo
1404 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

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