

**Resolution No.**

**County of Sonoma  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403**

**Date: 11/10/2009**

**Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Resolution Calling On The National Marine Fisheries Service To Undertake A Comprehensive Assessment Of The California Gray Whale.**

**Whereas**, each year, the California Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus* of the Eastern North Pacific stock) migrates along the California coast to feeding grounds in the Arctic, a journey of 8,500 to 11,000 miles; and

**Whereas**, the California Gray Whale is important for public education, recreational value, aesthetic appeal, economic significance, and scientific interest to the people of Sonoma County; and

**Whereas**, whale watching contributes to local economies in direct revenues and in the overall well-being of coastal, including the creation of jobs; and

**Whereas**, the California Gray Whale migrates past one of the most heavily industrialized coastlines in the world, and is exposed to marine pollution, marine vessel traffic, industrial noise, activities associated with the development of the outer continental shelf resources, fishing entanglements, bottom trawling, industrial development, and military and non-military sonar activity; and

**Whereas**, marine mammals, including the California Gray Whale, are vulnerable to underwater sound, including high -intensity mid-frequency sonar systems used off the California coast; and

**Whereas**, these sonar systems blast across large areas with levels of underwater noise loud enough to have resulted in deaths of marine mammals in incidents around the world; and

**Whereas**, the significant threats posed by global warming, melting sea ice, and the impact of increased sea water temperature in the Arctic feeding grounds of the California Gray Whale have very serious implications for the species; and

**Whereas**, the Federal Government placed the Gray whale on the endangered and threatened species list in 1970 when its estimated population was approximately 12,000 and removed it in 1994 when the populatin rose to 23,000; and

**Whereas**, pre-whaling population estimates used as a factor in determining species recovered status of the Gray Whale are no known to be erroneous and account for a fraction of actual historical populations; and

**Whereas**, a major collapse in 1999 and 2000 is estimated to have wiped out one-third to nearly one-half of the population; and

**Whereas**, there has been no proper population estimate published by the National Marine Fisheries Service since 2001; and

**Whereas**, there is no habitat protection for the Pacific Coast Feeding Aggregation in California, Oregon, or Washington State; and

**Whereas**, there are inconsistencies in the protection given to Gray Whales by different states; and

**Whereas**, Oregon lists the Gray Whale as endangered; and

**Whereas**, Washington lists the Gray Whale as sensitive; and

**Whereas**, California, by law, defers to the Federal Government and lists the Gray Whale as recovered; and

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved**, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma respectfully requests the United States Congress and the President of the United States to call upon the National Marine Fisheries Service to undertake an immediate and comprehensive assessment of the California Gray Whale.

**Be It Further Resolved** that this assessment should include all current research covering the migration routes, population dynamics, mortality of the California Gray Whale, and the impacts of threats to the California Gray Whale, including the impact of global warming on critical feeding grounds.

**Be It Further Resolved** that the National Marine Fisheries Service publish, and make available to the public, the results of the comprehensive assessment of the California Gray Whale.

**Be It Further Resolved** that, if the result of the comprehensive assessment or the body of scientific evidence warrants it, the National Marine Fisheries Service is requested to change the status of the Gray Whale to endangered.

**Be It Further Resolved** that the Clerk of the Board transmit copies of this

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resolution to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to both California Senators and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey.

**Supervisors:**

Brown:

Kerns:

Zane:

Carrillo:

Kelley:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

**So Ordered.**