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Sup. Carrillo

#29

Resolution No. 09-1071

ATTEST: NOV 12 2009

County of Sonoma
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

CHRIS THOMAS, Acting Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
of the State of California, In & for the County of Sonoma.

BY Woodson DEPUTY

Date: November 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 population 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.

Resolution #09-1071

Date: 11/10/2009

Page 3

Be It Further Resolved that the Clerk of the Board transmit copies of this 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: Absent Kerns: Absent Zane: Aye Carrillo: Aye Kelley: Aye

Ayes: 3 Noes: 0 Absent: 2 Abstain: 0

So Ordered.