

RESOLUTION ---_

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOR INCREASED FUNDING OF RESPONSE ACTIVITIES AND CODIFICATION OF THE CORAL REEF TASK FORCE.

WHEREAS, the Florida Reef Tract runs parallel to our coastline from Monroe County north to Martin County, and is a valuable national resource that protects our shores and beaches by reducing wave energy from storms and hurricanes, providing flood protection valued at over \$675 million per year and over \$1 billion during extreme weather events; and

WHEREAS, Florida's coral reef ecosystem provides a vital marine habitat for over 6,000 species, including species found nowhere else on earth; and

WHEREAS, this habitat is essential to our commercial fishing and tourism industries, supporting over 71,000 jobs within the region and generating over \$6 billion in positive economic impact annually; and

WHEREAS, protection of Florida's coral reefs is essential to ensuring the continued protection of our shorelines, coastal food sources, cultural practices, biomedical opportunities, and coastal economies that are a direct result of our coral reefs; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that coastal ocean waters are under great user pressure and suffer from water quality degradation that has compromised the resiliency of the Florida Reef Tract and its habitat; and

WHEREAS, the global threat and impacts to coral reefs continue to grow which, coupled with local stressors, is evidenced by coral reefs declining at an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS, a coral disease outbreak of unknown origin originated in the fall of 2014 and has persisted and continued to spread, affecting new reefs southwest of Key West in Monroe County to the northernmost coral reefs in Martin County, harming roughly 50 percent of the coral species present in the Florida Reef Tract; and

WHEREAS, the coral disease epidemic is causing near total mortality of vulnerable species present on the Florida Reef Tract, including reef-building coral species and species listed under the Endangered Species Act, resulting in an ever-increasing threat to fragile ecosystems that support Florida's fisheries and protect our coasts; and

WHEREAS, a collaborative, multi-organizational, multi-disciplinary emergency response has formed to address this grave threat; and

WHEREAS, inaction will ensure near extinction of the susceptible species found throughout the Florida Reef Tract; and

WHEREAS, the coral disease has spread from Florida to nine locations throughout the Caribbean, with the potential threat of introduction into the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Rick Scott (R-FL) and Representative Darren Soto (D-FL) introduced the Restoring Resilient Reefs Act of 2019 designed to reauthorize and update the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 to support the conservation of U.S. reefs, including five years of directed federal funding, technical assistance to jurisdictions for coral reef management and restoration, and the codification of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force; and

WHEREAS, establishing a long-term, recurring revenue source to provide adequate and flexible funding would provide dedicated resources to help find solutions necessary to protect the Florida Reef Tract.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS URGES THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE THE CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT OF 2000 AND THE RESTORING RESILIENT REEFS ACT OF 2019.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this 22nd day of October 2019.

ATTEST:

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

CAROLYN TIMMANN, CLERK OF THE
CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER

EDWARD V. CIAMPI, CHAIRMAN

APPROVED AS TO FORM & LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

SARAH W. WOODS, COUNTY ATTORNEY