

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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W6b

To: Coastal Commission and Interested Public

From: John Ainsworth, Executive Director
Sarah Christie, Legislative Director
Sean Drake, Legislative Fellow

Date: October 11, 2017

Subject: RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING “NO STRAW NOVEMBER”

I. BACKGROUND

At the September Coastal Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to prepare a resolution recognizing “No Straw November.” A proposed resolution was brought to the Commission’s attention by Shelby O’Neil, founder of the organization Jr Ocean Guardians. Jr Ocean Guardians is dedicated to helping protect and preserve the ocean and waterways for present and future generations. In furtherance of this mission, Jr Ocean Guardians seeks to raise awareness of plastic pollution, particularly single-use plastic straws, in the marine and coastal environment by declaring the month of November to be “No Straw November.” As part of No Straw November, Jr Ocean Guardians challenges the public in California and around the world to reduce consumption of single-use plastic straws, thereby decreasing the amount of plastic pollution entering the marine and coastal environment, and preserving the ocean for present and future generations.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Marine pollution is a global problem that endangers aquatic habitats and wildlife, impacts human health and safety, and costs local and national economies millions of dollars in wasted resources and lost revenues. Single-use plastic pollution is a particularly harmful form of marine pollution. Upon disposal, single-use plastics remain in the marine environment indefinitely, breaking into smaller pieces that are increasingly difficult to manage. Plastic pollution harms aquatic wildlife when it is ingested, and facilitates transportation of organisms that disrupt marine biodiversity. Plastic pollution also presents a danger to public health by increasing the pathogens and chemicals in waterways, lowering water quality. Such effects also damage coastal economies, and require significant resources to address.

The California Coastal Commission has a strong tradition of policies and programs aimed at decreasing marine pollution in furtherance of its mission to protect and enhance California’s coast and ocean for present and future generations. As the primary sponsor of California Coastal Cleanup Day every September, the Commission has coordinated 1.5 million volunteers in the removal of over 23 million pounds of trash from California’s oceans, beaches and waterways. The Commission has also supported a number of legislative efforts to reduce the sale and use of plastic bags and plastic microbeads. The work of Jr Ocean Guardians to preserve the ocean and

waterways aligns with this mission. No Straw November presents an opportunity for the Commission to heighten awareness of the danger that marine pollution poses to the coast and to the public, and to continue to progress in addressing this problem by reducing the quantity of single-use plastic pollution entering the marine environment.

III. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following motion:

RECOMMENDED MOTION: I move that the Commission adopt the attached resolution requesting that the Legislature consider introducing a measure officially declaring the month of November to be “No Straw November,” and that a copy of the Resolution be transmitted to Governor Brown and to the Legislature.

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**RESOLUTION BY THE
CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION
RECOGNIZING “NO STRAW NOVEMBER”**

Whereas: The California Coastal Commission was established by the People of California through initiative statute in 1972 and made permanent in 1976 by the California Legislature as the state’s principal coastal management agency with diverse responsibilities, including but not limited to, “... protect[ing] regional, state and national interests in ensuring the maintenance of the long-term productivity and economic vitality of coastal resources necessary for the well-being of the people of the state...” and

Whereas: The California Coastal Act further provides that in order “...to avoid long- term costs to the public and a diminished quality of life resulting from the misuse of coastal resources, to coordinate and integrate the activities of the many agencies whose activities impact the coastal zone, and to supplement their activities in matters not properly within the jurisdiction of any existing agency, it is necessary to provide for continued state coastal planning and management through a state coastal commission;” and

Whereas: The California Coastal Act mandates under section 30230 that “[m]arine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored;” and

Whereas: Plastic pollution poses a significant threat to the health of the California marine and coastal environment, and to the public’s enjoyment of that environment; and

Whereas: Single-use plastic straws contribute significantly to plastic pollution; and

Whereas: Single-use plastic straws pose a significant risk to marine wildlife when ingested accidentally or mistaken for a food source; and

Whereas: Reducing consumption of single-use plastic straws would decrease plastic pollution in the California marine and coastal environment; and

Whereas: The California Coastal Commission recognizes the efforts of Jr Ocean Guardians to reduce single-use plastic straw pollution by declaring the month of November to be “No Straw November”;

Therefore, Be it Resolved: That the California Coastal Commission supports recognition of No Straw November as an initiative to reduce plastic pollution in the marine and coastal environment; and

Be it Further Resolved: That the California Coastal Commission respectfully requests that the Legislature consider introducing a measure officially declaring the month of November to be *No Straw November*; and

Be it Further Resolved: That the Executive Director transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Governor and to the Legislature.

Dayna Bochco, Chair
California Coastal Commission

Effie Turnbull-Sanders, Vice Chair
California Coastal Commission

Date

Date

This resolution was adopted by the California Coastal Commission on October ____, 2017 by a ____ to ____ vote.