

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 68

Expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Marine Awareness Day.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Marine Awareness Day.

Whereas the ocean covers 71 percent of the Earth's surface and contains 97 percent of the planet's water;

Whereas the marine environment supports the life of nearly 50 percent of all species on Earth and helps sustain that life by providing 20 percent of the animal protein and five percent of the total protein in the human diet;

Whereas coastal habitats account for approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of all marine biological productivity, estuarine ecosystems are among the most productive regions on the planet, and coral reefs shelter the highest levels of marine diversity in the world;

Whereas coral reef ecosystems are a source of food for millions of people; protect coastlines from storms and erosion; provide habitat and spawning and nursery grounds for economically important fish species; provide jobs and income to local economies from fishing, recreation, and tourism; are a source of new medicines; and are hotspots of marine biodiversity;

Whereas it is difficult to put a dollar value on some of the benefits the world's marine ecosystems provide, but a recent estimate states that the total net benefit of coral reef ecosystems alone to be \$30,000,000,000 per year;

Whereas one of every six jobs in the United States is marine-related and over one-third of the United States gross national product originates in coastal areas;

Whereas 80 percent of the United States Virgin Islands' gross domestic product and employment are based on marine-related tourism;

Whereas the economy and cultural heritage of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and coastal states across the continental United States are significantly reliant on the tremendous ecosystem services that the ocean provides;

Whereas human-dominated marine ecosystems are experiencing accelerating loss of populations and species with largely unknown consequences, overall rates of resource collapse have increased, and recovery potential, stability, and water quality have decreased exponentially with declining diversity;

Whereas the ocean has absorbed a significant portion of all carbon dioxide emissions, causing unprecedented changes

to ocean chemistry affecting marine organisms that use carbonate to build shells or skeletons;

Whereas large quantities of human-generated trash enters the marine environment as marine debris and causes a decrease in water quality, death and morbidity for marine mammals, depletion of valuable fisheries, and decreased tourism revenue;

Whereas human-induced pressures such as pollution, degradation of water quality, harmful fishing practices, and a changing climate are adversely affecting our precious marine resources;

Whereas coral reefs, seabirds, marine mammals, fisheries, and tourism will be severely impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill;

Whereas marine biodiversity loss is increasingly impairing the ocean's capacity to function effectively as a system, or to provide food, maintain water quality, and recover from perturbations, yet available data suggest that at this point these trends are still reversible and the restoration of marine ecosystem biodiversity has shown to increase system productivity by fourfold;

Whereas the United States has had a longstanding commitment to the preservation and conservation of the marine environment, as demonstrated through the passage and implementation of numerous laws including the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.

1801 et seq.), the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.), and other statutes; and

Whereas the eighth day of June of each year is the appropriate day for designation as National Marine Awareness Day: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) celebrates the diversity of marine fisheries
- 3 and wildlife and the natural beauty and biological
- 4 richness that marine ecosystems provide;
- 5 (2) supports the goals and ideals of National
- 6 Marine Awareness Day; and
- 7 (3) calls upon the people of the United States
- 8 to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies,
- 9 programs, and activities.

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