

RESOLUTION ON PROTECTION OF WHALES

AND OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED RESUMPTION OF COMMERCIAL WHALING AND TEN-YEAR QUOTAS FOR GRAY WHALES AS PROPOSED BY THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

Whereas, whales are considered sentient beings that, at the apex of the marine food chain, are extremely important for the health and viability of our oceans;

Whereas, the California gray whale is our official state Marine Mammal and is enjoyed by millions of whale watchers along the coast of California every winter and spring;

Whereas, whale watching for gray whales and other species is a multi-million dollar industry supporting coastal communities throughout California;

Whereas, the California gray whale population is showing signs of stress;

Whereas, all whale populations, including the gray whale, are facing serious global environmental problems including effects of global warming and acidification of the oceans, harvesting of krill and other small fish species, intense underwater noise, and water pollution;

Whereas, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) has adopted an indefinite moratorium on commercial whaling that went into effect for the 1986-87 whaling season;

Whereas the US government vigorously promoted the whaling moratorium and has, in the past, led efforts to protect whales in the IWC and other global forums, including the establishment of the entire Southern Ocean as an IWC whale sanctuary;

Whereas an IWC delegation has now proposed an agreement that would legitimize and perpetuate commercial whaling, including so-called scientific whaling, on whale species, including several that are considered globally endangered;

Whereas, this agreement would legalize current commercial whaling, including so-called scientific whaling from which all the products are marketed, being conducted by the countries of Japan, Norway, and Iceland in defiance of the moratorium, as well as continue illegal trade in whale meat;

Whereas, this agreement would set ten-year quotas for whale species for both commercial and subsistence whaling, including gray whales, without regard to scientific review of the population status of the species or potential adverse impact of the quotas;

Whereas, this agreement would allow a subsistence quota of 1,400 gray whales over the next ten years, a quota that could only be modified by a three-quarters vote of the full IWC;

Whereas, the IWC is scheduled to consider this new whaling agreement and to take action on it at their annual meeting on June 21-25, 2010, in Agadir, Morocco;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT _____:

Opposes the agreement to renew commercial whaling and set ten-year quotas as proposed by the IWC; Urges President Barack Obama to direct the United States Delegation to the IWC to oppose the agreement or any other agreements to allow commercial whaling or set ten-year quotas;

Urges the IWC to end all commercial killing of whales, including killing undertaken by nations holding objections to the IWC moratorium and nations issuing so-called “scientific” permits to kill whales for commerce; and urges the IWC to focus instead on protecting whales and whale habitat, encouraging non-lethal and non-harassing uses of whales for education and scientific study, and addressing global environmental problems that impinge on whale populations as representatives of the biodiversity of the oceans.