

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STATEMENT



**Meeting Date:** July 12, 2022

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Council Members

**From:** George Garrett, City Manager

**Agenda Item:** **Resolution 2022-65**, Recognizing That The Final Version Of The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) “Restoration Blueprint” Will Be Released For Public Comment During The Month Of July, 2022; And Urging The FKNMS To Balance Natural Resource Conservation With Sustainable Uses And To Continue To Engage Stakeholders From Throughout The Florida Keys In The Review And Comment On This Document; And Providing For An Effective Date.

### **BACKGROUND**

On November 16, 1990, Congress designated the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) to be protected and managed by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

The FKNMS is a national treasure and protects 2,900 square nautical miles of unique and nationally significant marine resources, including most of one of world’s largest barrier reef ecosystems, 1.4 million acres of seagrass beds, 1,800 miles of mangrove-fringed shoreline, and more than 6,000 species of marine life, including sea turtles, manatees, and dolphins.

The FKNMS is hugely important economically and contributes \$4.4 billion annually to the state’s economy, with approximately 60% of the Florida Keys economy directly tied to marine-related activities; and

The FKNMS’ resources, including coral reefs, seagrass beds, and some fish populations, have been on the decline for decades due to impacts from increased use, marine debris, pollution, lack of freshwater delivery to Florida Bay, intensifying storms, disease outbreaks, rising ocean temperatures, and ocean acidification; and

NOAA and FDEP’s current management of the FKNMS is based on its 1997 final environmental impact statement (EIS) and a 2007 revised management plan which implemented sanctuary-wide regulations and established the nation’s first comprehensive network of marine zones following years of planning, design, and public input; and

The “Condition Report 2011 for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary,” (2011 Condition Report) the most recent document of its kind, classified Sanctuary water quality as “fair” or “fair/poor” and not improving, biologically structured habitats (e.g., coral reefs and seagrass beds) as “fair/poor” and declining, biodiversity as “fair/poor” and declining, and key species (e.g., corals) as “poor” and not improving, and this was before onset of the devastating Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease; and

The 2011 Condition Report supported the need for additional management actions that address the degraded conditions of some key habitats and living resources in the FKNMS; and

Due to the 2011 Condition Report and its obligation to adaptively manage its resources, FKNMS is updating its management plan and regulations and released the "Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary: A Restoration Blueprint" (Restoration Blueprint) in 2019 to gather public input on management and regulatory options that could help counteract the decline in resource conditions, reduce threats, and, where appropriate, restore coral reefs, seagrasses, and other important habitats; and

The FKNMS released (or "will release," depending on timing of the resolution) the next iteration of the Restoration Blueprint, also known as the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the "proposed rule" or the "draft rule," on July 12, 2022, with proposed actions to protect critical natural areas, improve zoning and marine management, and build ecological resiliency in conjunction with ongoing restoration efforts as well as sustainable uses, and

The FKNMS is holding a series of public meetings for stakeholders to learn more about the Restoration Blueprint and to provide public comment at those meetings and through other mechanisms for 100 days between July 12 and October 19, 2022; and

The City Council of the City of Marathon, Florida recognizes the biological, recreational, and commercial importance of the marine resources of the FKNMS, and that protecting FKNMS resources is valuable not only for the environment but also for the economy. The City Council further recognizes that the special marine resources of the region, which led to the area's designation as a national marine sanctuary, contribute to the high quality of life for residents and high quality visitor experiences, and that without these unique marine resources, both quality of life and the economy of the Keys would decline. Further, the City Council recognizes that public input is vitally important to determining the future of the Florida Keys, has encouraged the public to engage in past FKNMS public comment opportunities, and has encouraged FKNMS to take all comments into consideration.

**CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST:**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>

- 1. Comprehensive Plan
- 2. Other – 2010 Sewer Mandate

**FISCAL NOTE:**

NA

**APPROVED BY FINANCE DIRECTOR:**

NA

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA  
RESOLUTION 2022-65**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA RECOGNIZING THAT THE FINAL VERSION OF THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (FKNMS) “RESTORATION BLUEPRINT” WILL BE RELEASED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THE MONTH OF JULY, 2022; AND URGING THE FKNMS TO BALANCE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION WITH SUSTAINABLE USES AND TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS FROM THROUGHOUT THE FLORIDA KEYS IN THE REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THIS DOCUMENT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, on November 16, 1990, Congress designated the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) to be protected and managed by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP); and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS is a national treasure and protects 2,900 square nautical miles of unique and nationally significant marine resources, including most of one of world’s largest barrier reef ecosystems, 1.4 million acres of seagrass beds, 1,800 miles of mangrove-fringed shoreline, and more than 6,000 species of marine life, including sea turtles, manatees, and dolphins; and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS is hugely important economically and contributes \$4.4 billion annually to the state’s economy, with approximately 60% of the Florida Keys economy directly tied to marine-related activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS’ resources, including coral reefs, seagrass beds, and some fish populations, have been on the decline for decades due to impacts from increased use, marine debris, pollution, lack of freshwater delivery to Florida Bay, intensifying storms, disease outbreaks, rising ocean temperatures, and ocean acidification; and

**WHEREAS**, NOAA and FDEP’ s current management of the FKNMS is based on its 1997 final environmental impact statement (EIS) and a 2007 revised management plan which implemented sanctuary-wide regulations and established the nation’ s first comprehensive network of marine zones following years of planning, design, and public input; and

**WHEREAS**, the “Condition Report 2011 for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary,” (2011 Condition Report) the most recent document of its kind, classified Sanctuary water quality as “fair” or “fair/poor” and not improving, biologically structured habitats (e.g., coral

reefs and seagrass beds) as “fair/poor” and declining, biodiversity as “fair/poor” and declining, and key species (e.g., corals) as “poor” and not improving, and this was before onset of the devastating Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2011 Condition Report supported the need for additional management actions that address the degraded conditions of some key habitats and living resources in the FKNMS; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the 2011 Condition Report and its obligation to adaptively manage its resources, FKNMS is updating its management plan and regulations and released the "Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary: A Restoration Blueprint" (Restoration Blueprint) in 2019 to gather public input on management and regulatory options that could help counteract the decline in resource conditions, reduce threats, and, where appropriate, restore coral reefs, seagrasses, and other important habitats; and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS released (or “will release,” depending on timing of the resolution) the next iteration of the Restoration Blueprint, also known as the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the “proposed rule” or the “draft rule,” on July 12, 2022, with proposed actions to protect critical natural areas, improve zoning and marine management, and build ecological resiliency in conjunction with ongoing restoration efforts as well as sustainable uses, and

**WHEREAS**, the FKNMS is holding a series of public meetings for stakeholders to learn more about the Restoration Blueprint and to provide public comment at those meetings and through other mechanisms for 100 days between July 12 and October 19, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Marathon, Florida recognizes the biological, recreational, and commercial importance of the marine resources of the FKNMS, and that protecting FKNMS resources is valuable not only for the environment but also for the economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes that the special marine resources of the region, which led to the area's designation as a national marine sanctuary, contribute to the high quality of life for residents and high quality visitor experiences, and that without these unique marine resources, both quality of life and the economy of the Keys would decline; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes that public input is vitally important to determining the future of the Florida Keys, has encouraged the public to engage in past FKNMS public comment opportunities, and has encouraged FKNMS to take all comments into consideration.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, THAT:**

**Section 1.** The City Council supports the public engagement process for the FKNMS Restoration Blueprint, urges FKNMS to continue to engage stakeholders from throughout the

Florida Keys and beyond, and urges stakeholders to participate by making public comments, all with the end goal of balancing marine resource conservation and sustainable uses.

**Section 2.** Direct the Clerk to transmit copies of this resolution to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

**Section 3.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon the signature of both parties.

**Section 4.** The City Clerk is directed to transmit this Resolution to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO).

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, THIS 12TH DAY OF JULY, 2022.**

**THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA**

---

**John Bartus, Mayor**

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

**ATTEST:**

---

Diane Clavier, City Clerk

(City Seal)

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY FOR THE USE AND RELIANCE OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA ONLY:**

---

Steve Williams, City Attorney