

**CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA
RESOLUTION 2023-23**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA APPROVING A LETTER TO THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY AND NOAA NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE TO BE SIGNED BY THE MAYOR REQUESTING INCREASED FUNDING LEVELS FOR THE PROGRAM AND SITE WITH THE PENDING FINAL APPROVAL OF THE RESTORATION BLUEPRINT; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL OF THE RESOLUTION AND LETTER TO NOAA AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

WHEREAS, the City of Marathon, Florida is a duly constituted municipality having such power and authority conferred upon it by the Florida Constitution and Chapter 166, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas within the National Marine Sanctuary System comprise an essential network of more than 600,000 square miles of protected waters held in trust for all people, conserving some of the United States' most critical natural, historic, and cultural resources and promoting access for exploration and world-class outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, Sanctuaries and marine protected areas are vital to maintaining a healthy ocean, addressing climate change and sea level rise, and sustaining valuable coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, Sanctuaries generate \$8 billion annually in local economies and support numerous jobs and businesses in the fishing, tourism, recreation, and scientific research sectors; and

WHEREAS, increased investments in Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas are necessary to safeguard and enhance the ecosystem services and economic values these protected areas provide to our communities; and

WHEREAS, The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary harbors unique and valuable tropical marine ecosystems, including the only barrier coral reef in the continental United States, mangroves forests, seagrass meadows, numerous threatened and endangered species, and commercially and recreationally important species; and

WHEREAS, the coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangroves of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary buffer Florida Keys and South Florida communities from the impacts of

hurricanes and storm surge, with coral reefs providing flood protection benefits of \$675 million annually; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress established the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Protection Act in 1990 to protect the resources of the area, to educate and interpret for the public regarding the Florida Keys marine environment, and to manage human uses of the Sanctuary consistent with the Act; and

WHEREAS, The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and surrounding waters support diverse and interconnected habitats that are vital to the multi-billion dollar fishing and tourism industry of the Florida Keys and South Florida, including commercial and recreational fishing, snorkeling, diving, boat and equipment rentals, other tourism related business, and taxable property values in South Florida; and

WHEREAS, The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary supports more than 43,000 jobs in the Florida Keys, and contributes \$4.4 billion annually to Florida's economy; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress is currently developing its fiscal year 2023 budget for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including for Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas; and

WHEREAS, significantly increased funding is necessary to meet the goal of advancing conservation and restoration in Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas, including the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, the City of Marathon, Florida hereby wishes to convey its support for the current robust funding request in the 2024 budget for Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas to ensure the continued viability and success of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

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

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference.

Section 2. The City Council authorizes the m Mayor to sign the attached letter, attached as Exhibit "A" and to have the City Clerk forward this Resolution and letter to the appropriate agencies and responsive individuals.

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 City's Washington, D.C. lobbyist, to the City's Congressional Delegation, 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 14TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2023.

THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA



Luis Gonzalez, Mayor

AYES: Landry, Smith, Still, Gonzalez
NOES: None
ABSENT: Matlock
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:




Diane Clavier, City Clerk

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



CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA

9805 Overseas Highway, Marathon, Florida 33050
Phone: (305) 289-4130 Fax: (305) 743-3667
bartusj@ci.marathon.fl.us

February 14, 2023

Sarah Fangman, Superintendent
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
35 East Quay Road
Key West, Florida 33040

Dear Superintendent Fangman (Sarah):

With you and your outstanding staff, the Sanctuary program has received final public comments and the Sanctuary Advisory Council has just completed an exhaustive review and comment on the Restoration Blueprint. We now understand that it will be the State's opportunity to comment on the document.

The Blueprint is our step forward into the next twenty years with an eye toward protection and restoration of an ecosystem in peril. The ultimate and absolute conclusion about our efforts is that the Sanctuary program must adequately fund the massive effort in front of us.

Different than every other Marine Sanctuary under the purview of the National Ocean Service (NOS) is that absolutely every square foot of this 2,900 square nautical mile Marine Sanctuary is influenced by our human activities every minute, every hour, of every day. No other Sanctuary is as shallow on average and with as diverse assemblage of marine life over its entire area.

The City of Marathon applauds the fact that current funding is as high as it has been in recent history, and yet, still just a little under five million dollars (\$4.9 M). We further acknowledge that the Congressional budget for 2023 is significantly higher still (a little over 11% increase). Finally, we understand that it isn't simply the Sanctuary's independent budget that allows the program to function – to run, to provide the basis for important research efforts, and ultimately for its protection and enhancement of our amazing tropical ecosystem.

Bottom Line however – The funding proposal is still not enough!!

The seven and a half million dollar (\$7.5 M) increase in all Marine Sanctuary budgets is great news - but it will spread very thin across all sites, regions, and NOS headquarters. Those funds must then cover cost increases exacerbated by events such as COVID and an adjusting, changing economy. The increases at best cover lost budget potential over the past decade or more.

When the final rule adopted, you will have a considerable number of new or expanded responsibilities that require resources to implement (research, monitoring, education and outreach,



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Phone: (305) 289-4130 Fax: (305) 743-3667

bartusj@ci.marathon.fl.us

buoys, enforcement) and therefore the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will need a significant amount of additional funding to meet those responsibilities (far more than 11%).

The Restoration Blueprint, over a decade in the making, sets a course to address the considerable threats to the Florida Keys marine environment and represents a meaningful path toward a better future for our resources. To fully realize this potential, Congress needs to allocate the resources necessary to implement the carefully and thoughtfully developed plans to help protect and restore the resources upon which this community depends.

Mayor Luis Gonzalez
City of Marathon, Florida