

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF  
THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING  
THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION (FWC), AND  
URGING AN INCREASE TO FWC LAW ENFORCEMENT  
RESOURCES IN MONROE COUNTY; PROVIDING FOR  
AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Key West and Monroe County continue to invest in and to work in partnership with state and federal agencies to protect the health of the unique marine environment of the Florida Keys; and

**WHEREAS**, Monroe County is home to Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National park, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, each a national environmental treasure with uniquely important and diverse natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, Monroe County is also home to Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge, Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge, and Key West National Wildlife Refuge; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal and state governments have authorized and appropriated significant public investment in the restoration and preservation of Monroe County's ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, the sustained health and safety of Monroe's marine refuges and nearshore waters are vital to the tourist-based economy of Key West and all of the Florida Keys; and

**WHEREAS**, the marine environment that surrounds Key West and Monroe County attracts high numbers of recreational boaters, charter boats, commercial fishing vessels, liveaboard vessels, transient boaters, dive boats, personal watercraft, and kayaks, all contributing to the need for increasingly robust protective resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the highly active boating environment leads to a number of hazardous and environmentally damaging impacts including:

1) **Vessel groundings**: more than 300 vessel groundings are reported in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary every year, with 80% of these impacting the fragile seagrass habitat and damaging corals; and

2) **Boating accidents**: Monroe has the highest number of boating accidents in the State every year, and in 2020 Monroe once again led the State with 99 accidents and 9 fatalities; and

3) **Derelict vessels**: Monroe has the highest number of derelict vessels Statewide each year, and is currently on track for the removal of 60 derelict vessels this year; and

**WHEREAS**, existing FWC staff provide excellent and highly professional law enforcement service to Monroe County but could be strengthened by a staff increase; and

**WHEREAS**, FWC is responsible for protecting the environmental resources of a 2,900 square mile expanse of the Florida Keys' nearshore waters, 240 miles of coastline, and one of the most diverse and active boating environments in the State; and

**WHEREAS**, the provision and retention of FWC officers is vitally important to the ongoing protection of the Florida Keys' marine environment and the safety of the Key West and Monroe County boating public; and

**WHEREAS**, Monroe County has the highest cost of living in the State of Florida, and a well-documented lack of affordable/workforce housing, which presents a significant affordability challenge for local FWC officers; and

**WHEREAS**, there are currently 15 vacant FWC officer positions in the Florida Keys; and

**WHEREAS**, the Key West City Commission urges FWC to direct increased resources to the protection of the Florida Keys marine environment, and to implement strategies such as sufficient pay consideration and/or a housing allowance to account for the local high cost of living to aid in the recruitment and retention of its officers; and

**WHEREAS,** the continued environmental and economic viability of Florida Keys depends on the preservation and safety of our surrounding waters; and

**WHEREAS,** the Florida Keys' unique marine environment is a highly valuable economic engine, generating over \$200M in sales tax each year, and deserving of increased State investment for its protection; and

**WHEREAS,** Monroe County encourages the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to review the level of compensation for its law enforcement officers in a manner that provides for adequate housing while increasing the level of service needed for public safety and protection of environmental assets within the Florida Keys; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the Key West City Commission expresses strong support for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and its law enforcement officers, and urges the State of Florida and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider directing additional law enforcement resources to Monroe County.

Section 2: That the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to transmit certified copies of this Resolution

to Governor DeSantis, Senator Ana Marie Rodrigues, Representative Jim Mooney, FWC Executive Director Eric Sutton, FWC Commissioners Robert Spottswood, Mike Sole, Rodney Barreto, Steven Hudson, Gary Lester, Gary Nicklaus, and Sonya Rood.

Section 3: That this Resolution shall go into effect immediately upon its passage and adoption and authentication by the signature of the Presiding Officer and the Clerk of the Commission.

Passed and adopted by the City Commission at a meeting held this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Authenticated by the Presiding Officer and Clerk of the Commission on \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Filed with the Clerk on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Mayor Teri Johnston	_____
Vice Mayor Sam Kaufman	_____
Commissioner Gregory Davila	_____
Commissioner Mary Lou Hoover	_____
Commissioner Clayton Lopez	_____
Commissioner Billy Wardlow	_____
Commissioner Jimmy Weekley	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
TERI JOHNSTON, MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHERYL SMITH, CITY CLERK