

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**REQUESTING SUPPORT FOR WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE AND SENATE
BILLS RELATED TO: POLLUTION PREVENTION; INCREASING HABITAT AND
FISH ABUNDANCE; PROTECTION OF SOUTHERN RESIDENT ORCA WHALES
FROM VESSELS; AND IMPROVING THE SAFETY OF OIL TRANSPORTATION**

WHEREAS, in March 2018, Governor Inslee issued Executive Order 18-02 which directed state agencies to take immediate actions to help the endangered southern resident orca population and established the Southern Resident Orca Task Force to develop a long-term plan for recovering orcas; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force includes nearly 50 members representing a wide range of sectors including state agencies, the legislature, and state, tribal, federal and local governments, as well as private sector and non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, southern resident orcas primarily consume Chinook salmon, bioaccumulate toxics in their blubber, and communicate underwater with members of the pod; and

WHEREAS, there are currently 74 southern resident orcas, down from a healthy population of about 200; and

WHEREAS, the orcas are struggling to survive as a result of declining Chinook and other salmon runs, high-mortality rates due to relying upon their toxic blubber reserves to sustain them, and increasing vessel traffic impairing their ability to communicate amongst themselves while they hunt; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Resident Orca Task Force focused on addressing the above three key problems: prey availability (through habitat, hydropower, hatcheries, harvest, and forage fish), toxics in the water, and noise disturbance from boats and vessels; and

WHEREAS, during the Southern Resident Orca Task Force’s deliberations last summer, Tahlequah (J35) carried her dead calf for 17 days around the Salish Sea in mourning and drew attention to the endangered population from around the world; and

WHEREAS, the declining population of the southern resident orcas is an indication of noise pollution interfering with the Orca’s sonar used to find prey, the poor health of our salmon runs and the environment; and

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2 **WHEREAS**, on November 16, 2018, the Southern Resident Orca Task Force
3 released their final 36 recommendations to Governor Inslee; and
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5 **WHEREAS**, Governor Inslee and the Legislature have introduced the following
6 pieces of legislation based on recommendations from the Southern Resident Orca Task
7 Force:
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- 9 • HB 1194 preventing toxic pollution that affects public health or our environment.
- 10 • HB 1579, Implementing recommendations of the southern resident killer whale
11 task force related to increasing chinook abundance, and SB 5580, implementing
12 recommendations of the southern resident killer whale task force related to
13 increasing habitat and forage fish abundance.
- 14 • HB 1580 and SB 5577, concerning the protection of southern resident orca
15 whales from vessels.
- 16 • HB 1578 and SB 5578, Reducing threats to southern resident killer whales by
17 improving the safety of oil transportation.
18

19 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council will
20 forward this resolution in support of the above legislation to our 40th and 42nd
21 Legislators and members of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks,
22 Senate Environment, Energy & Technology, House Environment & Energy, and House
23 Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources Committees.
24

25 **ADOPTED** this ____ day of _____, 2019.
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27
28 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

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Rud Browne, Council Chair

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34 WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
35 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
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38 _____
39 Civil Deputy Prosecutor
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