

PROPOSED

RESOLUTION NO.

1 A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD
2 COUNTY, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR SECTION 2 OF SB 1386/HB 1557,
3 AS INTRODUCED, WHICH ADDS THE KRISTIN JACOBS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM
4 CONSERVATION AREA TO THE LIST OF FLORIDA AQUATIC PRESERVE AREAS;
5 URGING THE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE THEIR
6 SUPPORT FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT BY
7 SUPPORTING LONG-TERM RECURRING REVENUE SOURCES FOR CORAL REEF
8 DISEASE RESPONSE AND RESTORATION, INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ASSISTED
9 REPRODUCTION AND PROPAGATION OF CORALS FOR FUTURE RESTORATION
10 EFFORTS, AND RESEARCH FOCUSED ON PATHOGEN IDENTIFICATION AND
11 DISEASE RESPONSE STRATEGIES; URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
12 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE
13 CONSERVATION COMMISSION COLLABORATE TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN
14 THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LONG-TERM REEF
15 CONSERVATION STRATEGY; REQUESTING THAT RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES
16 ENGAGE LOCAL PARTNERS ON COASTAL PROJECTS TO ENSURE THESE
17 EFFORTS ARE REASONABLY ACCOMMODATED AS PART OF COASTAL
18 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT EFFORTS; DIRECTING THE COUNTY
19 ADMINISTRATOR TO TRANSMIT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION TO THE
20 GOVERNOR, FLORIDA LEGISLATURE, SECRETARY OF THE FLORIDA

21 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND REGIONAL CORAL REEF
22 STAKEHOLDERS; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

23 (Sponsored by Vice-Mayor Beam Furr)

24

25 WHEREAS, Florida's Coral Reef runs parallel to the coastline from the Dry
26 Tortugas north to Martin County and is a unique and valuable national resource that
27 protects our shorelines, beaches, and upland resources by reducing wave energy from
28 storms and hurricanes, thereby providing flood protection values of over \$675 million per
29 year and more than \$1 billion during extreme weather events;

30 WHEREAS, Florida's Coral Reef provides essential marine habitat to over 6,000
31 species of marine life including several threatened and endangered species, and is
32 designated as a critical habitat for Staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) and Elkhorn (*Acropora*
33 *palmata*) corals listed under the Endangered Species Act;

34 WHEREAS, protection of Florida's Coral Reef is essential for ensuring the
35 continued protection of our shorelines, coastal food sources, cultural practices,
36 biomedical opportunities, and coastal economies that are direct results of our coral reefs;

37 WHEREAS, coastal ocean waters are under great user pressure and suffer from
38 water quality degradation that has compromised the resiliency of Florida's Coral Reef and
39 its habitat;

40 WHEREAS, in 2003, a collaborative multiagency effort founded the Southeast
41 Florida Action Network ("SEAFAN"), which was renamed the Southeast Florida Coral
42 Reef Initiative ("SEFCRI") in 2005 with the addition of non agency representatives, to
43 foster conservation planning activities for the coral reefs of the Southeast Florida area;

44 WHEREAS, local officials were eager to provide an additional forum and engage
45 policymakers in a framework that could aid in advancing technical recommendations
46 through policy and action;

47 WHEREAS, this resulted in Broward, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Martin
48 counties adopting enabling resolutions in 2012 to create the Coastal Ocean Task Force
49 (“COTF”), with representation from each of the four counties, state and federal agencies,
50 nonprofits, and other stakeholders, to provide recommendations for coastal ocean
51 resources and conservation priorities and strategies;

52 WHEREAS, the COTF finalized and approved a Recommendations Report in June
53 2015, supported by each of the partner counties, and approved by the Broward County
54 Board of County Commissioners via Resolution No. 2016-525 in December 2016;

55 WHEREAS, in 2018, after many years of determined efforts of State
56 Representative Kristin Jacobs and regional stakeholders, including the joint South Florida
57 and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, the Legislature established the
58 Southeast Florida Coral Reef Conservation Area, which encompasses sovereign
59 submerged lands and state waters offshore of Broward, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and
60 Martin counties;

61 WHEREAS, in 2021, the Legislature and Governor honored the late
62 Representative Kristin Jacobs by commemorating her many contributions on behalf of the
63 environment and coral reefs and renaming the Southeast Florida Coral Reef
64 Conservation Area the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area
65 (“KJECA”);

66 WHEREAS, the KJECA covers 105 miles of the northern portion of Florida's Coral
67 Reef, from the northern boundary of Biscayne National Park north to the Port St. Lucie
68 Inlet;

69 WHEREAS, Broward County staff continues to participate in the development of
70 goals, objectives, and strategies for the conservation and restoration of both Florida's
71 Coral Reef and the KJECA;

72 WHEREAS, Broward County and the region have long valued the reef habitat as
73 essential to the state's commercial, recreational fishing, and tourism industries, as it
74 supports more than 71,000 jobs within the Southeast Florida region and generates more
75 than \$6 billion in positive economic impact annually;

76 WHEREAS, Florida's Coral Reef is the region's first line of defense against the
77 impacts of rising seas and storm surge, and environmental conditions continue to threaten
78 the adaptative capacity of the Reef to rising seas, temperatures, disease, and ocean
79 acidification;

80 WHEREAS, coral reefs are facing increasing global threats and impacts, and,
81 coupled with local stressors, are declining at an alarming rate, particularly in light of the
82 2014 Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease epidemic causing near total mortality of vulnerable
83 and endangered species present on Florida's Coral Reef;

84 WHEREAS, in the summer of 2023, the coral disease epidemic was compounded
85 by record-hot ocean temperatures, which triggered widespread coral bleaching and
86 additional coral mortality throughout Florida's Coral Reef;

87 WHEREAS, the Broward County Climate Change Action Plan includes several
88 strategies focused on ongoing coral reef restoration and resilience activities, the status of
89 coral reefs, and the effects of climate change and sea-level rise;

90 WHEREAS, the Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975, as codified in Part II of Chapter 258,
91 Florida Statutes, establishes a list of state-owned aquatic preserves that are administered
92 on behalf of the state by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to ensure
93 “that state-owned submerged lands in areas which have exceptional biological, aesthetic,
94 and scientific value be set aside forever as aquatic preserves or sanctuaries for the benefit
95 of future generations”;

96 WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature is currently considering SB 1386/HB 1557,
97 Section 2 of which amends Section 258.39, Florida Statutes, to add the KJECA to the list
98 of Florida Aquatic Preserves; and

99 WHEREAS, on February 1, 2024, the Broward County Climate Change Task Force
100 passed a motion urging that the Broward County Board of County Commissioners
101 (“Board”) support the inclusion of the KJECA in the list of Florida Aquatic Preserves,
102 NOW, THEREFORE,

103 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
104 BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA:

105 Section 1. The Board supports the designation of the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef
106 Ecosystem Conservation Area, described in Section 2 of SB 1386/HB 1557, as a Florida
107 Aquatic Preserve, under Section 258.39, Florida Statutes.

108 Section 2. The Board urges the Legislature and the Governor to continue to
109 increase their support for coral reef restoration and management, and supports a long-

110 term, recurring revenue source to provide adequate and flexible funding to support: (i)
111 dedicated staff resources for coral reef disease response and restoration efforts; (ii)
112 infrastructure and capacity needed for assisted reproduction and propagation of corals
113 and coral reef-associated species for future ecosystem restoration efforts; and (iii) in-
114 water and land-based priority research focused on pathogen identification and disease
115 response strategies.

116 Section 3. The Board urges the Florida Department of Environmental Protection
117 and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to work collaboratively with
118 stakeholders to develop, and promptly implement, a long-term coral reef conservation
119 strategy for the KJECA before adverse impacts to the reef cannot be reversed.

120 Section 4. The Board requests that responsible agencies actively engage local
121 partners on coastal projects deemed to be in the public interest to ensure these efforts
122 are reasonably accommodated as part of coastal conservation and management efforts.

123 Section 5. The Board directs the County Administrator to transmit a copy of this
124 Resolution to the Governor, the Florida Legislature, the Secretary of the Florida
125 Department of Environmental Protection, and the regional coral reef stakeholders.

