

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-2493

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, URGING CONCERTED LOCAL ACTIONS TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO RETAIN THE NOAA FISHERIES HEADQUARTERS ON VIRGINIA KEY; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") conducts atmospheric, marine and fisheries-related scientific operations at two NOAA facilities headquartered in Virginia Key; and

WHEREAS, one of NOAA's Virginia Key facilities, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center ("SEFSC"), is responsible for scientific research on living marine resources that occupy marine and estuarine habitats of the continental southeastern United States, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

WHEREAS, SEFSC is one of the six national marine fishery science centers responsible for federal marine fishery research programs and is the primary provider of research on fisheries and habitats for Biscayne National Park and Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, the annual total budget for SEFSC Miami lab ranges between \$15,000,000 to \$17,000,000, the bulk of which supports salaries for about 170 masters and Ph.D. level scientists; and

WHEREAS, the coral reefs in south Florida that SEFSC Miami lab works to

protect have an estimated asset value of over \$4.4 billion and are directly associated with over 70,000 part-time and full-time jobs in the area; and

WHEREAS, NOAA operations at Virginia Key are performed in concert with research and teaching functions at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science ("RSMAS"), which is located directly adjacent to the NOAA campuses; and

WHEREAS, NOAA's Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies (CIMAS) funds and coordinates scientific partnerships with RSMAS, Florida International University (FIU) and other university programs in South Florida to educate the next generation of scientific leaders and collaboratively work on pragmatic problems of societal importance; and

WHEREAS, leveraging their shared mission and physical proximity, for decades scientists and staff personnel involved in NOAA's operations at Virginia Key have served as adjunct faculty, research assistants and other venture partners with RSMAS faculty and students, supporting and expanding on RSMAS's educational mission and engendering extensive working collaborations between NOAA and RSMAS thus catalyzing significant research and knowledge-advancement opportunities that relate directly to our sub-tropical marine environment; and

WHEREAS, local news reports and reports provided by the University of Miami indicate that NOAA's Fisheries facility on Virginia Key may be outdated and in need of capital improvements, and that NOAA may be incentivized to close its fisheries facility on

Virginia Key and relocate that operation to St. Petersburg; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Surfside (the "Town"), the Village of Key Biscayne, the City of Miami and South Florida generally benefit from the proximity of NOAA and RSMAS, and from CIMAS-sponsored scientific collaborations which, among other things, contribute materially to the positive reputation of greater Miami; and

WHEREAS, the Town considers it a materially adverse development for NOAA to relocate its fisheries headquarters, which would set back pending research dealing with critical local issues such as hurricane intensity, weather research, fish population sustainability and coral reef health, engendering a " brain-drain", diminishing Miami's standing for future investments such as that contemplated by Amazon, and compromising the reliability and effectiveness of future collaborations between NOAA and RSMAS, all to the detriment of the Town and the greater Miami area; and

WHEREAS, as thoughtful environmental stewards, Town residents regularly seek ways to improve, enhance, beautify and care for the marine environment, and draw important guidance and purpose from NOAA and RSMAS in such connection.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Recitals. The foregoing Whereas clauses are hereby ratified and incorporated as the legislative intent of this Resolution.

Section 2. Encourage Effective Intervention.

(a) The Town Commission urges Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, RSMAS

and the University of Miami, FIU, South Florida federal and state legislators, and others interested in the future of greater Miami as home to an educated citizenry and excellent institutions, to advocate for and take other affirmative steps promptly to address NOAA facilities needs and encourage and enable NOAA and CIMAS to maintain their full presence and mission on Virginia Key.

(b) The Town Commission draws favorable attention to the numerous significant and positive collaborations between NOAA and other local institutions that are facilitated by NOAA's location on Virginia Key.

(c) The Town Commission also draws favorable attention to the reputational enhancements and positive prospects for future growth for greater Miami deriving from NOAA's and CIMAS's presence on Virginia Key.

Section 3. Transmittal. The Town Clerk is hereby directed to transmit this Resolution to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Biscayne National Park, Florida Keys Marine Sanctuary local governments, University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, NOAA's Cooperative Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Studies, Florida International University, local governments surrounding Virginia Key including the Village of Key Biscayne and the City of Miami, and legislators representing the Town and South Florida, and to other recipients as may be identified by the Town Commission.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall be effective immediately from and

after adoption hereof.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of March, 2018.

Motion by Commissioner Karukin,

Second by Commissioner Paul.

FINAL VOTE ON ADOPTION

Commissioner Daniel Gielchninsky

Commissioner Michael Karukin

Commissioner Tina Paul

Vice Mayor Barry Cohen

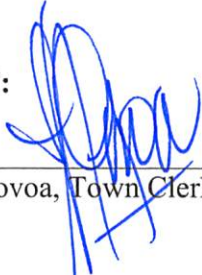
Mayor Daniel Dietch

yes
yes
yes
Absent
yes



Daniel Dietch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sandra Novoa, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY FOR THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE ONLY:



Weiss, Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman P.L.
Town Attorney