

From: [Liz Taylor](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Tracy Jensen](#); [Malia Vella](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item 10A 2024-4444
Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 5:16:37 PM

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and City Council members-

I wanted to write in support of the Resolution supporting free and safe passage of whales, sea turtles and other marine animals in Alameda's coastal waters and supporting the State of California's Vision Zero target for zero mortality for whales and sea turtles.

As you may know, SF Bay is a Mission Blue Hope Spot. I worked with local Alameda educator and CASA member Sylvia Gibson along with Dr. Karina Nielsen to shepherd the application along. Here is a link to the welcome video and story map:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9c7d92ef756043789bca8a505fa0b984>

Having the City of Alameda taking action with this Resolution further solidifies the leadership role that Alameda has exhibited in environmental protection and coastal resilience.

In 2019 a small humpback whale turned up in Sea Plane Lagoon. It was a credit to the city that nearby pile driving was curtailed to reduce noise and vibration that would stress the animal. Earlier this year, a gray whale washed up in Alameda. The cause of death in this case was a ship strike. DOER has been working with the USCG for some years to find ways to reduce ship strike incidents. Slowing ships down, crowdsourcing observations from pilots and vessels, routing vessels outside of known migration routes, and investing in shipboard technology for collision avoidance are all in the works but cost money to implement. Resolutions like the one before you help motivate positive change and raise public awareness. Here is a link to efforts in the Salish Sea, another Mission Blue Hope Spot: <https://www.news.uscg.mil/Press-Releases/Article/3681963/us-coast-guard-introduces-cetacean-desk-enhancing-cetacean-safety-in-salish-sea/>

Work to protect whales from ship strikes also helps to protect the iconic leatherback sea turtle – largest of all sea turtles- that occasionally come into the bay.

Another critical risk to both whales and turtles is marine debris. In our region the main debris threats are plastic and fishing gear. Leatherback sea turtles eat jellyfish. They have specialized keratin spikes in their mouths to retain the jellyfish. Imagine what happens when they mistake a plastic bag for a jellyfish.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOBbkLtlgE> Whales, especially baleen whales including blue, humpback, gray, and fin that visit our waters, are lunge feeders – scooping up small fish and krill along with a host of plastic debris in some cases. Whales have been found beached with tremendous amounts of plastic in their stomachs. Alameda has done an outstanding job of working to ban single use plastics in the restaurant sector and it is making a difference. The Ocean Cleanup, which was hosted by Alameda for their initial deployment also helped bring greater attention to the threat of ocean plastic.

Every second Saturday Alameda CASA and DOER co-sponsor a coastal clean-up at Sea Plane lagoon. We've noted a decrease in things like plastic straws and stoppers but still collect several hundred pounds of debris on each occasion.

Finally, I'd like to address the role that fishing gear plays in both whale and sea turtle mortality. The marine mammal center, NOAA and other responders frequently get calls about entangled whales and turtles – usually spotted by recreational boaters. Crab/lobster gear entanglement has been in the news in recent years as the risks to whales are weighed against fishing pressures. Rope-less crab gear - that is traps that do not have a free floating line/buoy are available. These utilize the same kinds of timed or triggered releases that we use at DOER to recover ocean instrumentation packages. Acoustic and galvanic releases have been used in these science applications for decades. They can be adapted to fishing too. Fish nets and long lines are much harder to solve for. Whales get entangled in these long, heavy pieces of debris and cannot free themselves. The “blue steel” or similar high strength lines can sever the tail flukes or flippers off of a whale – slowly sawing through their body tissues. It is a tortuous and excruciating death by drowning, starvation or both. Responders do try to free entangled animals but it is dangerous work. At DOER we have some pneumatic tools in development that can make this work safer but it still a challenging task. You can see more about whales and whale entanglement in this episode of Dive In with Liz and Sylvia <https://youtu.be/O9DK5h2cj90?si=qgoNVYBC5EgiKb9>

Thank you again for considering this resolution to help protect iconic ocean wildlife

Best regards

Liz Taylor
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From: [Benjamin Grundy](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Cc: [CityCouncil-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Additional information on Agenda Item 10A- October 15, 2024 Council Meeting
Date: Sunday, October 13, 2024 7:49:58 AM
Attachments: [2024-10-13 Alameda Whale Safe City Resolution Explainer.pdf](#)

Hello City Clerk and Council Members,

My name is Ben Grundy, and I am an Oceans Campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity. I am reaching out to provide supplemental information on the Whale Safe City Resolution that will be considered for adoption at the Council's October 15th meeting ([Agenda item 10A](#)).

Note: The information provided in the attached document on cost does not include potential expenditures related to the general process of introducing and/or adopting resolutions (for example: staff hours, printing services, or other general administrative costs.)

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Best,
Ben Grundy

Ben Grundy
Oceans Campaigner
Center for Biological Diversity
(510) 844-7121

Hello Alameda City Council Members,

My name is Ben Grundy, and I am an Oceans Campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity. I am reaching out to provide some supplemental information regarding the Whale Safe City Resolution that will be considered at the Council’s October 15th meeting ([Agenda item 10A](#)).

Purpose

The purpose of this Resolution is to establish the City of Alameda as a “Whale Safe City.” Becoming a Whale Safe City means that the City of Alameda supports the free passage of all whales and sea turtles that traverse our coastal waters and supports the state of California’s commitment to preventing whale and sea turtle entanglements and vessel strikes, commitment to investing in whale-safe fisheries by supporting innovative technologies like on-demand fishing gear, and commitment to ensuring that current and future generations of Californians can enjoy our state’s rich marine biodiversity.

Expected Cost

There is no fiscal responsibility or cost associated with this resolution. If passed, adoption of this resolution will not require any expenditures or disbursements of funds from the City of Alameda.

Commitments and/or Restrictions Established

Adoption of this resolution will not result in the implementation of any new regulations, bans, or restrictions. Specifically, fishing and boating activities will not be affected by the adoption of this Resolution.

Organizations in Support of this Resolution:



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