

Administrator

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION OF OFFSHORE
PROJECTS INTO MARINE ANIMAL DEATHS ALONG THE NEW JERSEY
COASTLINE

WHEREAS, the County of Monmouth, along with over 30 other New Jersey communities and municipalities, stand united in their concerns for the unprecedented number of whales and dolphins that have recently washed ashore; and

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2023, 8 dolphins washed ashore injured in Sea Isle City, New Jersey, with 6 needing to be euthanized from injury and 2 dying immediately from yet to be determined causes, bringing the number of dolphin deaths to over 10 onshore alone since December 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2023, a humpback whale washed ashore in Manasquan, and a week later the tenth in the greater New Jersey/New York area washed ashore since December 5, 2022, increasing the staggering number of whale deaths to over 23 whales onshore alone, of which 3 distinct species have been found, including Humpback, Minke and Atlantic Right whales; and

WHEREAS, these numbers do not reflect the likelihood of other whale and dolphin deaths where the animals have been injured, nor account for those which likely were fatally injured and remains did not wash ashore; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary number of marine mammal strandings coincides with ongoing activity from acoustic sonar survey vessels for the development of offshore wind as well as in close proximity to growing commercial shipping lanes and

recreational marine boating traffic; and

WHEREAS, there has yet to be determined through a preponderance of evidence by the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Bureau of Public Utilities, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Bureau of Ocean Energy Management a definitive cause of injury and death to marine life; and

WHEREAS, the County is not opposed to exploring clean energy, nor insinuating wind turbines are a sole cause; nonetheless the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Monmouth are concerned about the impacts projects may have on our environment, marine life, and tourism without thorough evidence suggesting otherwise; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Monmouth requests these State and Federal governmental agencies share unbiased findings of all investigations into the deaths of marine mammals in order to determine if any such correlation or which effectively finds there is no link between injuries and deaths with acoustic sonar surveying and/or whether the echolocation of these animals has been impacted in anyway.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Monmouth that the County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey calls for an investigation of acoustic sonar surveying by offshore wind turbine companies or any offshore activities that may be causing injuries and deaths, until such investigations are held and evidence shared with concerned communities and their residents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board shall forward a certified true copy of this resolution to the Governor of the State of New Jersey; Lieutenant Governor of the State of New Jersey; the New Jersey State Legislature; the members of the Monmouth County Legislative Delegation; New Jersey League of Municipalities; all County Boards of County Commissioners and the Mayor and Council of all towns within the County of Monmouth.