

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 44

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 146

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 44—Relative to marine mammal conservation.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 9, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 44, Hill. Commercial whaling: moratoriums.

This measure would request that the President and the Congress of the United States provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks. This measure would memorialize the Legislature's opposition to any proposal that would result in the International Whaling Commission's lifting of the current moratorium on commercial whaling, which would legalize commercial whaling, authorize new whaling quotas for nations that have been violating the current moratorium, and allow the resumption of whale hunting in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

WHEREAS, Whales are evolutionarily complex, highly intelligent, and extremely important for the health and viability of ocean ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, the International Whaling Commission voted to implement a pause on commercial whaling beginning in 1986 in order to allow significantly depleted whale stocks to recover and quotas on whales were set to zero; and

WHEREAS, At the June, 2010 meeting of the International Whaling Commission in Agadir, Morocco, the United States actively negotiated in support of a draft proposal that would have authorized commercial whaling activity for the countries of Japan, Iceland, and Norway for the first time since the moratorium was enacted in 1986; and

WHEREAS, California is a coastal state dedicated to the protection of our marine mammal populations, fisheries, and ocean resources; and

WHEREAS, California's ocean waters support several species of whales, including blue whales, gray whales, pilot whales, fin whales, humpbacks, and orcas, all of which have special biological, ecological, aesthetic, cultural, political, and symbolic qualities and are particularly sensitive to the threats of whale hunting; and

WHEREAS, The protection of whales is of the utmost importance to Californians and our state's coastal and ocean-dependent industries, including tourism; and

WHEREAS, Whaling, pollution, and climate change threaten these peaceful creatures; and

WHEREAS, Whaling has decimated these once abundant species, including the blue whale, which has gone from a population of several

hundred thousand to near extinction and only an estimated 5,000 to 12,000 blue whales remain throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The whaling moratorium has staved off extinction, but must remain in place to support a population of many different species of whales that continue to struggle; and

WHEREAS, Lifting the moratorium could result in significant, irreversible, and harmful consequences to whale populations; and

WHEREAS, California has led the way in marine responsibility and in 2008, the Legislature passed Assembly Joint Resolution 49, which calls on the National Marine Fisheries Service to undertake an immediate and comprehensive assessment of the California gray whale to determine if the gray whale should be added to the endangered species list; and

WHEREAS, Legalizing commercial whaling, which would decimate whale stocks, is contrary to our state's goal of protecting our marine mammal populations, fisheries, and ocean resources; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully requests that the President and the Congress of the United States do everything in their power to provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully opposes any proposal that would result in the International Whaling Commission's lifting of the commercial whaling moratorium, which would legalize commercial whaling, authorize new whaling quotas for nations that have been violating the current moratorium, and allow whale hunting in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.