

CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

..title

A RESOLUTION expressing concern with the Northwest testing and training proposal of the United States Department of the Navy for Puget Sound, coastal waters from northern California through Washington state, and for Alaska.

..body

WHEREAS, the United States Department of the Navy (Navy) is proposing to conduct testing and training activities in Puget Sound and coastal waters that impact marine animals;

WHEREAS, Puget Sound is the second largest estuary in the United States with extensive shoreline, nutrient-rich waters, and diverse habitats that sustain a variety of wildlife, including the endangered Southern resident killer whale (orca); and

WHEREAS, within the severely declining and endangered population of Southern resident orcas, the loss of even a single orca could greatly undermine decades of recovery efforts and make recovery impossible; and

WHEREAS, whales and Coast Salish people have lived together in this region for at least 5,000 years and orcas are featured in the stories and art of the Coast Salish people; and

WHEREAS, the Federal government has acted to protect orcas and other marine and aquatic species through the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature has further protected Southern resident orcas by implementing the recommendations of the Southern Resident Orca Task Force; and

WHEREAS, the Navy's Draft Northwest Training and Testing Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) outlines how sonar and explosives could harm marine animals, especially those that rely on sound to communicate, locate food, avoid predators, and to navigate; and

1 WHEREAS, dozens of creatures in the Salish Sea would be affected by the Navy’s activities,
2 including endangered Southern resident orcas and endangered Western North Pacific
3 humpback whales; and

4 WHEREAS, naval sonar has been shown to cause whales to stop vocalizing and feeding,
5 abandon their habitat, panic, and, under some circumstances, strand and die; and

6 WHEREAS, the Navy first acknowledged damaging effects of sonar in 2001 after a government-
7 led investigation concluded that the stranding of 17 whales, and eventual death of seven,
8 was due to acoustic or impulse trauma the animals experienced from sonars aboard US
9 Navy ships; and

10 WHEREAS, in 2003 a Navy sonar training exercise in the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca and
11 Haro Strait caused the J Pod, one of the three pods (J, K, L) making up the Southern
12 resident orca population, to stop foraging and exhibit abnormal behaviors and movement,
13 change direction multiple times, and group together in shallow water where they are at
14 increased risk of stranding; and

15 WHEREAS, in 2012 a juvenile Southern resident female was stranded with evidence of trauma
16 consistent with an explosion or high-pressure impact, a week after the Canadian Navy
17 had been conducting sonar exercises in the region; and

18 WHEREAS, in 2017, explosives detonated by the Canadian Navy near L Pod caused the whales
19 to group together suddenly and flee the area; and

20 WHEREAS, The City of Seattle submitted public comment on the Draft Navy Northwest
21 Training and Testing Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and underscored the
22 need to protect the safety and livelihood of the Southern resident orca; NOW,
23 THEREFORE,

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE**
2 **MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:**

3 Section 1. The City of Seattle requests the Navy reconsider aspects of its Northwest
4 testing and training proposal and take meaningful steps to reduce noise and disturbance affecting
5 marine mammals, including the Southern resident orca.

6 Section 2. The City of Seattle urges the Navy to use the most recent science about Puget
7 Sound marine mammals in its analysis to prevent further harm to endangered Southern resident
8 orcas, endangered Western North Pacific humpback whales, and other marine animals impacted
9 by its activities.

10 Section 3. The City of Seattle urges the Navy to expand habitat protections and cease
11 training and testing activities when endangered Southern resident orcas, endangered Western
12 North Pacific humpback whales, and other priority marine animals are present.

13 Section 4. The City of Seattle affirms its continued support for the collective work of the
14 scientific community, environmental organizations, agency partners, and the work of Puget
15 Sound tribes, to restore and protect Puget Sound and to reduce critical threats to the survival of
16 Southern resident orcas, including diminished salmon, toxic contaminants, and disturbance from
17 noise and vessel traffic.

18 Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2019,
19 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of
20 _____, 2019.

21 _____

22 President _____ of the City Council

1 The Mayor concurred the _____ day of _____, 2019.

2 _____

3 Jenny A. Durkan, Mayor

4 Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2019.

5 _____

6 Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

7 (Seal)