

PROCLAMATION OF THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF GIG HARBOR

Recognizing the Rights and Value of the Southern Resident Orca

WHEREAS, the Southern Resident Orcas are culturally and economically important to the people of Washington State and the world; and

WHEREAS, despite legal protections for nearly two decades, the population continues to decline and is critically endangered, with only 74 individuals remaining; and

WHEREAS, over 20 countries, dozens of local communities in the United States, and several tribal governments have recognized that nature has inherent rights, and that human society has the responsibility to protect and steward nature; and

WHEREAS, the rights of the Southern Resident Orcas include, but are not limited to, the right to life, autonomy, free and safe passage, adequate food supply from naturally occurring sources, and freedom from conditions causing physical, emotional, or mental harm, including a habitat degraded by noise, pollution, and contamination; and

WHEREAS, major factors in the decline of the Southern Resident Orca population include captures for marine parks in the 1960s and 70s, declining salmon runs, toxic pollution, loss of habitat, and increasing vessel traffic and noise levels in Puget Sound and the ocean; and

WHEREAS, bringing attention to the Southern Resident Orcas will also bring attention to the need to clean up Puget Sound and restore and conserve important Puget Sound habitats and Chinook salmon spawning grounds; and

WHEREAS, we are fortunate to have this community of Southern Resident Orcas in our midst, know them as individuals and pods, and watch them from our ferries, boats, and many miles of shoreline; and

WHEREAS, we have only begun to learn about the intelligence and social capabilities of Southern Resident Orcas; and

WHEREAS, Washington State supports efforts to recover this endangered population of Southern Resident Orcas.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Tracie Markley, Mayor of the City of Gig Harbor, Washington, do hereby proclaim that the City of Gig Harbor supports and urges action by local, State, federal, and tribal governments that secure and effectuate the rights of the Southern Resident Orcas and of the ecosystems upon which they depend.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Gig Harbor to be affixed this 12th day of December, 2022.

Tracie Markley, Mayor