

URGING THE MAYOR AND THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO TO OPPOSE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY'S PROPOSED DEPLOYMENT OF SURVEILLANCE TOWED ARRAY SENSOR SYSTEM LOW FREQUENCY ACTIVE (SURTASS LFA) SONAR

WHEREAS, the United States Navy is requesting a Letter of Authorization from the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in order to facilitate its proposed Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System (SURTASS) Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar program; and

WHEREAS, the Navy states that the proposed SURTASS LFA sonar program would meet the need for improved detection of foreign submarines, thereby providing the Navy with adequate time to react to, and defend against, submarine warfare; and

WHEREAS, during deployment, the proposed SURTASS LFA sonar systems would introduce low-frequency acoustic signals into the world's oceans that could potentially affect marine life; and

WHEREAS, the preservation of biodiversity and protection of whales and other marine mammals is of great concern to the citizenry of the City and County of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the protection and preservation of the ocean and marine mammals that inhabit the ocean are of great cultural and historical significance in San Francisco and the state of California; and

WHEREAS, numerous scientific and environmental groups have proffered evidence that the use of SURTASS LFA sonar may be linked to internal bleeding, disorientation and hearing loss, resulting in whale deaths and strandings; and

WHEREAS, according to the Navy's own test results, certain low frequency sonar levels may have harmful effects on humans who swim or dive in nearby waters; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2001 the Navy issued a report regarding harm caused to marine mammals in the Bahamas in March 2000, in which it admitted its experimental use of mid-range active sonar contributed to the killing and/or injury of whales in the vicinity of the testing.

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Commission on the Environment believes that there are other technologies already deployed or soon to be deployed, that can perform the same function as SURTASS LFA without the harmful side effects; and

WHEREAS, the preservation of biodiversity and protection of marine life in California's waters is not just an ecological, biological, or cultural concern, but also a matter of economic necessity because a healthy ocean environment is an integral part of San Francisco and California's visitor-driven economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Francisco Commission on the Environment urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City & County of San Francisco to oppose the United States Navy's proposed deployment of Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System (SURTASS) Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar program unless and until scientific evidence clearly and independently establishes that no harmful effects on the marine environment will result from the program; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City & County of San Francisco to request that the National Marine Fisheries Service reject the United States of America Department of the Navy's

application for a Letter of Authorization to take marine mammals during the deployment of the SURTASS LFA sonar unless and until it is established that no harmful effects will result from such deployment; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco to request that that National Marine Fisheries Service conduct public hearings in San Francisco and throughout the State of California on the application for the proposed deployment of the sonar program; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to President George W. Bush, Senator Barbara Boxer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Representative Tom Lantos, Representative Nancy Pelosi, Governor Gray Davis, Mayor Willie L. Brown, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Commission on the Environment at its special meeting on March 19, 2002.

Kristal R. Aliyas
Commission Secretary

VOTE:

Ayes: Commissioners Bingham, Bradford-Bell, Evans, Hayes, Rodriguez and Shah
Noes: None
Absent: Commissioner Werbe