

1 **[Banning Release of Commercially Raised Butterflies in San Francisco]**

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3 **Resolution in support of efforts to create and implement a City Ordinance banning**
4 **the release of commercially raised butterflies in San Francisco.**

5 WHEREAS, The Environmental Protection Element and the Open Space Element of
6 the General Plan have established that the City and County of San Francisco has a duty to
7 protect the natural environment; and,

8 WHEREAS, The City's Precautionary Principle reinforces the City's duty to enhance,
9 protect and preserve San Francisco's environment; and,

10 WHEREAS, The Commission on the Environment has adopted a resolution in
11 support of biological diversity; and

12 WHEREAS, Releasing commercially raised butterflies, as is sometimes practiced at
13 gatherings such as weddings, celebrations, and other events, can negatively impact
14 indigenous butterfly populations and agency and community efforts to conserve them; and,

15 WHEREAS, This type of commercial use has long been banned with respect to
16 native bird species; and,

17 WHEREAS, The commercial transport and release of butterflies perturbs our ability
18 to **understand** the biogeography (natural distribution, breeding locations, migratory
19 patterns, etc.) of butterfly species, and therefore our ability to determine their habitat and
20 conservation needs; and,

21 WHEREAS, Experts on butterfly conservation have also declared that releases may
22 present problems through the transfer of disease from wild habitats, laboratories, or
23 industrial breeding facilities to other colonies, where die-off may result or diseases may
24 weaken wild populations and make them more susceptible to other stressors; and,

1 WHEREAS, Although USDA permits are required to ship butterflies between states
2 and permits are not issued for shipment across the Continental Divide, the USDA does not
3 require that the butterflies be free of diseases; and,

4 WHEREAS, Experts state that release of non-native and/or commercially raised
5 butterflies can cause the introduction of deleterious genes into local populations, which
6 could negatively influence the survivorship potential of native butterflies; and,

7 WHEREAS, Monarch butterflies in particular have experienced a serious decline In
8 California, and San Francisco can help in the conservation and recovery of this and other
9 species for the benefit of the ecosystem and to allow the people of California and Mexico to
10 continue to experience the wonder of these creatures in their natural habitats, following their
11 natural migrations and lifecycles; and,

12 WHEREAS, Many San Franciscans believe that butterflies are animals to be
13 respected and valued as part of the City's natural heritage and should not be used as
14 decorations or for entertainment; therefore, be it,

15 RESOLVED, That the Commission on the Environment supports and endorses
16 efforts to ban the release of commercially raised Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) within
17 the City and County of San Francisco through an ordinance to be introduced at the Board of
18 Supervisors.