

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-38

**ADVISORY RESOLUTION OF THE MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OPPOSING DEPLOYMENT OF HIGH INTENSITY ACTIVE SONAR**

WHEREAS the people of Marin County, California, recognize that a healthy ocean environment is an integral part of Marin's economy as well as being the basis for sustainable biological systems on Earth; and

WHEREAS we are privileged to have a unique ocean ecosystem off the Marin coast which includes two National Marine Sanctuaries, Gulf of the Farallones and the Cordell Bank; and

WHEREAS high intensity active sonar used by the military is known to have adverse effects on marine life, including death, strandings, and disruption to usual behavior in whales and dolphins; and

WHEREAS the Department of Defense sought and was granted unprecedented exemptions from the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which allow them to ignore protections for whales, dolphins, and other marine mammals; and

WHEREAS the U.S. and other navies are currently using high intensity active sonar in the world's oceans, including the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS the location of Marin County, along the migration route of gray whales, benefits our local economy by attracting many tourists, whom also participate in whale-watching excursions to see humpback, blue, and other species of whales and dolphins further off our coast; and

WHEREAS sonar activity could result in a mass stranding of dolphins or whales on the Marin County coastline, resulting in the closing of beaches and clean-up of dead whales and dolphins (as recently evidenced in the Florida Keyes), which could create a large financial burden for Marin County and bring unwelcome press attention; and

WHEREAS there is scientific evidence that intensive ocean noise causes death and injury in fish and also affects the development of fish eggs; and

WHEREAS sports fishing and local fishing industries, especially herring and salmon, contribute to the economy of Marin County, and declines in fisheries may be caused in part by ocean noise pollution; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Navy itself has warned that high-intensity active sonar can have harmful effects on humans who swim or dive in nearby waters; and

WHEREAS other more benign technologies already exist that are less harmful to marine ecosystems and that can perform similar functions of high intensity active sonar; and

WHEREAS the European Parliament overwhelmingly passed a resolution in October 2004 to establish a moratorium on use of high-intensity active sonar by European Nations and NATO; and

WHEREAS members of the International Whaling Commission and World Conservation Union are expressing concerns about deployment of high intensity active sonar in the oceans around the world; and

WHEREAS similar resolutions have been passed by the City of Hilo, the County of Maui, and the City and County of San Francisco.

NOW, THEREFORE, BASED ON THE FINDINGS CONTAINED HEREIN, THE MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE that we oppose deployment and use of high intensity active sonar, unless and until scientific evidence clearly and independently establishes that no harmful effects on the marine environment will result from its use;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to President George W. Bush, Senator Barbara Boxer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Representative Lynn Woolsey, Assemblyman Joe Nation, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Defense, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.


PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held on this 12th day of April 2005, by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS Charles McGlashan, Susan L. Adams, Steve Kinsey,
Harold C. Brown, Jr.

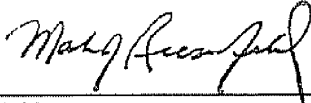
NOES: NONE

ABSENT: SUPERVISOR Cynthia L. Murray

ATTEST:



PRESIDENT, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



CLERK