

**RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING GOVERNOR HENRY MCMASTER TO DECLARE AN  
ECONOMIC DISASTER DUE TO THE DUMPING OF IMPORTED SHRIMP INTO THE  
UNITED STATES MARKET**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton has a long history of shrimping, which has resulted in extensive economic and social components, with families depending on commercial fishing for generations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County account for nearly twenty five percent (25%) of the annual amount of wild caught shrimp in the State of South Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, shrimp is one of South Carolina's top four fisheries; and

**WHEREAS**, maintaining a sustainable commercial fishing industry is essential to preserving the unique character of South Carolina's local seafood-based cuisine; and

**WHEREAS**, sustaining an economic viable commercial fishing industry strongly compliments and promotes the long-run growth of South Carolina's growing tourism industry; and

**WHEREAS**, shrimping is of economic importance to a number of coastal South Carolina communities, including the Town of Bluffton; and

**WHEREAS**, the fishing and shrimping community contributes to the local tourism based economy and is an integral part of the local culture; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton is a coastal community defined by its natural environment and resources, and sits along the banks of the tidal May River and straddles the unique estuarial environment and ecosystem; and

**WHEREAS**, the tidal marshes of Bluffton provide highly productive nursery grounds for numerous commercially and recreationally important species, including shrimp; and

**WHEREAS**, the May River is significant to the community today for a number of reasons, including:

- its numerous natural resource populations that are directly harvested and utilized by local and regional residents; and
- its economic impacts, both direct and indirect, to the community; and
- its Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) designation from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – Environmental Quality Control's (SCDHEC-EQC) Bureau of Water for a high level of water quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton has worked with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) to conduct scientific studies to better understand the Town's natural resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Bluffton's Comprehensive Plan, Blueprint Bluffton includes encouraging and supporting ecotourism in the May River Watershed, which has become a sanctuary for shrimp, crabs, oysters, and saltwater fish; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States' imports of frozen warmwater shrimp nearly doubled from 2013 to 2021 to an unprecedented level of 1.8 billion pounds; and

**WHEREAS**, coastal communities in both Georgia and South Carolina have adopted similar resolutions; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON TOWN COUNCIL THAT A FORMAL LETTER BE SENT TO GOVERNOR HENRY MCMASTER AND THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA REQUESTING THAT HE DECLARE AN ECONOMIC DISASTER OF THE DOMESTIC SHRIMPING INDUSTRY, AND REQUEST A FISHERY RESOURCE DISASTER DETERMINATION BE MADE BY THE U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, PURSUANT TO THE FISHERY RESOURCE DISASTERS IMPROVEMENT ACT, FOR THE SPECIFIC REASONS IN THIS RESOLUTION AND FURTHER OUTLINED BELOW:**

- Due to the recent influxes of imported shrimp in the United States markets, also known as Shrimp Dumping, the ability of the South Carolina shrimping industry to market and sell wild caught domestic shrimp has been severely affected.
- As a result of Shrimp Dumping, shrimpers throughout the region have seen a decline in the value of a shrimp harvest and due to the decline, are struggling to keep their vessels docked, keep employees and some have been forced to quit the industry.
- The magnitude of the economic damage and the rapidity with which the continuation of the decrease of the marketability of domestic local shrimp is an imminent threat to the economies of the Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, all Coastal Communities and the entire American Shrimping Industry.
- The declaration of an economic disaster would authorize the Governor of South Carolina, an affected State, to submit a request for a fishery resource disaster determination to be made by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, in accordance with the Fishery Resources Disasters Improvement Act.
- This determination would allow for the imposition of controls on the activities that tend to increase the likelihood of economic damage to the economy of the Town of Bluffton and the entire region.
- Such controls, once implemented, would make financial fisher disaster assistance available to South Carolina shrimpers and have the potential of protecting lives and property by mitigating the threat of preventing the complete destruction of the shrimping economy.

**THIS RESOLUTION SHALL BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON ADOPTION, SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED AS OF THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2023.**

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Lisa Sulka, Mayor  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

**ATTEST:**

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Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina