

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-73

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA, HONORING AND RECOMMITTING TO THE SAFEGUARDS THAT HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS AS A RESULT OF THE 1994 CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT.

WHEREAS, October 31, 2019 marks twenty-five years since the signing of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act (CDPA), which recognized the world class uniqueness of the California deserts and provided destination points by creating the Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park and Death Valley National Park, as well as 69 new desert wilderness areas in the California desert region; and

WHEREAS, the California Desert Protection Act catalyzed efforts to protect desert wildlife, natural areas and military installations through subsequent legislative and administrative efforts including the creation of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa National Monuments, the 2009 Public Lands Omnibus Act, the designations of Castle Mountain, Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow National Monuments, the landmark collaborative Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (a 2016 amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan that designated 4.2 million acres of the desert's most sensitive natural and cultural landscapes for conservation, included conservation management actions to protect desert resources, and streamlined renewable energy development in targeted areas) and the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (collectively, with the CDPA, "Twenty Five Years of Desert Protection"); and

WHEREAS, over the last twenty-five years, the protected lands and wildlife values of the California desert have created an economic windfall. The economic benefit of desert travel, including visitor spending, industry earnings and government revenue, is increasing every year - to \$7.62 billion in 2018. Travel industry-generated employment in the California desert region has increased by more than 35% since 2010 alone, with more than 73,000 employees in 2018. Indeed, a 2017 National Park Service report shows that over 2.5 million visitors to Joshua Tree National Park *alone* in 2016 spent close to \$125 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 1,701 sustainable jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$165 million; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands of the California desert are the historic home and contain the sacred sites, cultural artifacts and cultural landscapes of the Chemehuevi, Mojave, Serrano, Cahuilla, Paiute and other tribes that have lived in the desert region for millennia; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands of the California desert provide a place for members of the desert community and visitors alike to view wildlife, hike, bike and engage in off-road motorized recreation; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands of the California desert provides a place for residents who enjoy the rural character of deserts, mountains and wildlands to experience solitude, undisturbed vistas and glorious sunsets and to gaze up into the night sky without light or noise pollution; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands of the California desert supports training activities at five military installations representing four of the five military services (Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force), each of which are vital to our nation's military security and to our region's economy. Protected public lands buffer installations against development and unsustainable use of groundwater which could threaten the military's ability to safely and effectively train for wartime and peacetime contingencies; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert safeguard precious groundwater, aquifer watersheds, desert plants and wildlife, and air quality critical to our region and economy; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert support local planning by providing certainty to establish goals, policies, and implementation actions related to renewable energy production, habitat mitigation, environmental protection, recreational opportunities, community character, natural resource utilization, scenic resource protection, and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert are the product of community input and stakeholder engagement; and

WHEREAS, it remains in the City of Coachella's interest to maintain the protected lands of the California desert as a recreational resource, as part of the larger ecosystem, and as wildlands; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Coachella honors and recommits itself to the safeguards within the past Twenty-Five Years of Desert Protection and the scenic vistas, cultural landscapes, wildlife habitat, dark night skies, water resources, military security and economic benefits provided by the protection of lands in the California Desert such as Joshua Tree and Death Valley National Parks, California Desert National Conservation Lands like Rainbow Basin, Juniper Flats, and Amargosa Basin, and planning frameworks like the 2016 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (an amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan) that balance conservation, recreation, and development.

PASSED APPROVED and ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Coachella this 11th day of December 2019.

Steven A. Hernandez
Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela M. Zepeda
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carlos Campos
City Attorney

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE) ss.
CITY OF COACHELLA)

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Resolution No. 2019-73 was duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Coachella at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 13th day of November 2019, by the following vote of Council:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Andrea J. Carranza, MMC
Deputy City Clerk