

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, URGING PARQUES REUNIDOS SERVICIOS CENTRALES S.A., THE OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THE MIAMI SEAQUARIUM, TO RETIRE LOLITA, THE ENDANGERED ORCA WHALE, FROM HER SMALL TANK IN THE MIAMI SEAQUARIUM, AND MOVE HER TO A PEN IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; AND, DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO TRANSMIT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION TO ALL COUNTY MAYORS IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND TO THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES.**

**WHEREAS**, killer whales, also known as orca whales, are traditionally important to the Lummi Nation, a Native American tribe in western Washington state; and

**WHEREAS**, the orca whale "Lolita" was captured from Penn Cove, Puget Sound, Washington on August 8, 1970 and sold to the Miami Seaquarium for \$20,000; and

**WHEREAS**, Lolita is now 22-feet long and 7,000 pounds and has lived for over four decades in a tank measuring only 80-by-35 feet wide – just four times her body length – and only 20 feet deep; and

**WHEREAS**, during Hurricane Irma, she was left in harm's way, her tank uncovered and exposed to potential 130+ mph hurricane-force winds and structural collapse. If Hurricane Irma had traveled along its expected forecast along the eastern Florida coast, the resulting damage could have easily led to her death; and

**WHEREAS**, a comprehensive transport, rehab, and retirement plan has been developed by Ken Balcomb, of the Center for Whale Research, and Howard Garrett, of the Orca Network, to bring Lolita safely to Eastsound, Orcas Island in Washington state for rehabilitation in a seapen in her natural environment; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 1, 2017, the Lummi Nation passed the following motion regarding Lolita, also known as *Tokitae*: "The Lummi Nation honors our connection to the Killer Whale (*qw'e lh ' ol mé chen*) as a culturally significant species and supports the work of the Lummi Nation's Sovereignty and Treaty Protection Office in its efforts to bring the Killer Whale *Tokitae* home to her family as soon as possible"; and

**WHEREAS**, the future health, safety, and welfare for the endangered orca whale Lolita is a matter of great concern to the City of Miami Beach and to all who care about our endangered species and their humane treatment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA**, that the Mayor and City Commission hereby urges Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A. to retire Lolita, the endangered orca whale, from her small tank in the Miami Seaquarium, and mover her to a pen in the Pacific Northwest as soon as possible; and, direct the City Clerk to transmit a copy of this Resolution to all county mayors in the State of Florida and to the Florida League of Cities.

**PASSED and ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip Levine, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO  
FORM & LANGUAGE  
& FOR EXECUTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

16-10-17  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



PHILIP LEVINE  
MAYOR

October 18, 2017

Fernando Eiroa, President and CEO  
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.  
Paseo de la Castellana, 216 - 16th floor  
Madrid, Spain 28046

Dear Mr. Eiroa,

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

As mayors from cities and counties across the state of Florida, we urge you to retire Lolita the endangered orca whale from her small tank in Miami Seaquarium, and move her to a sea pen in the Pacific Northwest as soon as possible.

For over four decades, Lolita has been confined to a tank measuring only 35 feet wide—just four times her body length—and only 20 feet deep. During Hurricane Irma, she was left in harm's way, her tank uncovered and exposed to potential 130+ mph hurricane-force winds and structural collapse (among other dangers). If Irma had traveled along its expected forecast along the eastern Florida coast, the resulting damage could have easily led to her death.

It is now clear that the Miami Seaquarium is not only an inhumane place for Lolita—it is also unsafe.

A well-vetted plan already exists ([orcanetwork.org](http://orcanetwork.org)) to move and rehabilitate Lolita to a waiting sea pen in the San Juan Islands in Washington state. According to Orca Network, a community of whale experts, it will cost approximately \$1.5 million and take 6-8 weeks for the entire process—from transport, rehabilitation, to retirement. This money can easily be raised from private sector sources, and the process can be completed with minimal risk.

Children and adults are drawn to the Miami Seaquarium to learn about conservation and protection of our marine environment. Orcas neither belong in marine life parks nor in South Florida. This is an opportunity to be a leader, and set an example for other parks around the world to follow.

Lolita has entertained generations of visitors in Florida. Now, it is time to retire Lolita to a safer and healthier existence.

There are no hurricanes in Puget Sound. It is time to bring her home.

Sincerely,

Mayor Philip Levine,  
City of Miami Beach

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

1700 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE, MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139

TEL: (305) 673-7035 • FAX: (305) 673-7098 • E-MAIL: PHILIPLEVINE@MIAMIBEACHFL.GOV