



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Kraft

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
The Red Knot - Let's Save the Species from Extinction

FOR the purpose of supporting the Friends of the Red Knot Club by requesting that the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior place the Red Knot on the Endangered Species List.

Recitals

The Red Knot is a small, plump, reddish shorebird. Every Spring, the Red Knot migrates more than 9,000 miles from Tierra del Fuego to the Canadian Arctic. Its last stop is on the Delaware Bay shores, to feed on horseshoe crab eggs. This nourishment must last them for the remainder of their journey. If food is scarce when the birds arrive in the Arctic, their stored up fat must last even longer.

The harvesting of horseshoe crabs increased in the 1990s, as horseshoe crabs became a popular source of bait for the commercial fishing industry. The number of horseshoe crab eggs on Delaware Bay shores has dropped from 40,000 eggs to 1,500 eggs per square meter from the 1990s to 2005.

Because they have fewer eggs to feed on, the population of Red Knots has also decreased. An annual survey shows that the number of Red Knots stopping at Delaware Bay has dropped from 95,000 in 1989 to only 12,375 in 2007. Scientific models predict that the Red Knot will likely become extinct by 2010.

Current efforts to restrict over-fishing of horseshoe crabs are insufficient and inconsistent from state to state. Arguing that a harvest of 100,000 male crabs will have a "minimal effect" on the population, Superior Court Judge Richard Stokes recently overturned a two-year moratorium on horseshoe crab fishing in Delaware. Scientists, however, are concerned that even a limited harvest will have a devastating effect, in part, because the horseshoe crab requires nine to eleven years to reach sexual maturity.

Placing the Red Knot on the Endangered Species List will allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to put restrictions on horseshoe crab harvesting. As the number of horseshoe crabs and their eggs increase, more Red Knots will get the amount of food they need to complete their migration and breed successfully. The Department of

the Interior has identified the Red Knot as a candidate for the Endangered Species List. In the several years it can take for a candidate species to actually be listed as endangered, the Red Knot numbers could decrease so much that management measures would not be able to reverse the population decline.

The Friends of the Red Knot Club are a group of students from the GreenMount School who decided to work together to try and save the Red Knot bird from extinction. Hopefully, through the proper steps, we can provide protections for this beautiful bird, and allow the Red Knot species to flourish and grow in population for years to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body supports the Friends of the Red Knot Club by requesting that the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior place the Red Knot on the Endangered Species List.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Secretary of the State Department of the Interior, the Friends of the Red Knot, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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