



Memorandum

File #: Item # 2018-069, **Version:** 1

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and Town Council

From: Sue Ellen Loyzelle, Vice Mayor

Date: March 21, 2018

Re: Urging U.S. Department of Commerce to Retain the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Headquarters on Virginia Key

REQUEST

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CUTLER BAY, FLORIDA, URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO RETAIN THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION FISHERIES HEADQUARTERS ON VIRGINIA KEY; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (“NOAA”) conducts atmospheric, marine, and fisheries-related scientific operations at two (2) NOAA facilities on Virginia Key. The work done by the NOAA addresses local environmental and weather threats and enhances South Florida’s overall reputation. Since 1965, the fisheries headquarters on Virginia Key has represented years of collaboration between the NOAA and the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. NOAA also works in tandem with Florida International University and other schools to educate the next generation of scientific leaders and supports individuals interested in helping protect the environment.

The NOAA fisheries facility promotes economic and environmental sustainability for the South Florida region. The Town of Cutler Bay is located adjacent to Biscayne Bay and environmentally protected wetlands and benefits from the research and progress made at the Fisheries headquarters on Virginia Key.

The NOAA fisheries facility on Virginia Key is reportedly in need of capital improvements and may be incentivized to close the Virginia Key fisheries facility to relocate to St. Petersburg, Florida. This relocation would be detrimental to the economic and environmental impact the Fisheries facilities has on South Florida.

Our friends at the Village of Key Biscayne adopted a Resolution on February 13, 2018 urging NOAA to retain the fisheries facility on Virginia Key as a relocation would set back pending research dealing with critical local

issues such as hurricane intensity, weather research, fish population sustainability, and coral reef health (Attachment “A”). The Town supports the Village of Key Biscayne, and the retention of the NOAA fisheries facility on Virginia Key, to contribute to the future of South Florida as home to an educated citizenry and excellent institutions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Town Council adopt the attached Resolution, urging the United States Department of Commerce to retain the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Headquarters on Virginia Key.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment “A” - Village of Key Biscayne Resolution No. 2018-4