



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

**RON ROBERTS**  
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2014 APR 10 PM 4 04

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
OF SUPERVISORS

**AGENDA ITEM**

**DATE:** April 15, 2014

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** Supporting SeaWorld San Diego (DISTRICTS: ALL)

**Overview**

The San Diego region has long enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with SeaWorld San Diego. Throughout the last 50 years, SeaWorld's invaluable economic, educational, scientific and entertainment benefits have manifested a special place in the local community. SeaWorld has become something greater than an amusement park; it is part of the fabric of San Diego County.

Attracting a worldwide audience, SeaWorld remains a dominating force in the region's tourism industry, with its many economic benefits spanning from boosting hotel occupancy rates, to creating thousands of good jobs for San Diegans. SeaWorld's Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Service is an international model, operating as a paramount asset for medically tending to hundreds of injured and ill animals each year, most of them found on our beaches and in local coastal waters. The educational programs available have offered a unique experience to generations of children, helping them attain a broader understanding of the world they live in, at a notably decreased cost. Additionally, the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSRI) plays an integral role in a myriad of local policy decisions.

Unfortunately, recently introduced state legislation threatened to greatly diminish SeaWorld's ability to contribute to our community. It has heightened our awareness that state or federal officials may at a future date exercise their considerable powers to once again attack the economic underpinnings of one of our region's greatest assets.

Today's action would add to the County Legislative Program opposition to future efforts that would eliminate or restrict the use of Orcas at SeaWorld.

**Recommendation(s)**

**SUPERVISOR RON ROBERTS**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to include in the County's Legislative Program policy guidelines section opposition to any federal or state legislative effort that would eliminate or restrict the use of Orcas at SeaWorld.

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2. Direct the CAO to draft a letter expressing this Board of Supervisors' opposition to State Assembly Bill 2140 - the Orca Welfare and Safety Act, to the appropriate members of the California State Assembly and Senate, should AB 2140 be considered again during the remaining months of the current State Legislative Session.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact with this action.

**Business Impact Statement**

N/A

**Advisory Board Statement**

N/A

**Background**

San Diego is fortunate to have three major anchors in of its local economy: tourism, innovation industries, and the military/defense sector. As a principal tourism anchor, SeaWorld is the region's second largest attraction, drawing millions of visitors each year. The San Diego Tourism Authority reports that travelers who visit SeaWorld are among the most beneficial visitors, spending more money, willing to travel farther and regularly staying at local hotels. In addition to its draw as a destination, SeaWorld provides thousands of good jobs and an infusion of activity that contributes to San Diego's economic vitality.

SeaWorld's Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Service is a paramount asset for addressing the needs of marine life, particularly when aquatic animals are stranded or injured in their natural environment. These programs are responsible for rescuing or medically tending to hundreds of animals annually.

Visitors to SeaWorld participate in an experience that goes far beyond entertainment. The educational and conservation programs provided by SeaWorld serve thousands of children each year. In accordance with its lease, at least 75 percent of the attractions in the Mission Bay marine park must include significant animal education or conservation-related elements, and two-thirds of the park must contain a significant education or conservation focus.

The Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSRI) provides research necessary to understand conflicts between human activities and the natural world and scientifically supported solutions for a myriad public policy decisions that arise. From water cleanliness, to fish replenishment, HSRI has been there when San Diego needed them to answer the tough questions.

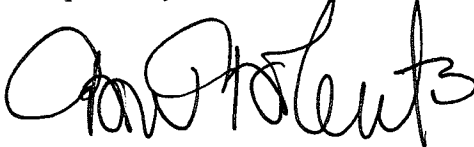
For decades, SeaWorld San Diego has operated its facilities in compliance with the Federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services. Additionally, the park self-regulates its procedures as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

For 50 years, SeaWorld has been there for San Diego. Now is the time for this Board of Supervisors to be there for SeaWorld. I urge your support of the recommendations.

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**Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan**  
N/A

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Roberts" clearly distinguishable.

RON ROBERTS  
Supervisor, Fourth District

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**REQUIRES FOUR VOTES:**        Yes      No

**WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED**  
   Yes      No

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**  
N/A

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**  
N/A

**MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:**  
N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION  
NUMBER(S):**  
N/A

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** District 4, Board of Supervisors

**OTHER CONCURRENCES(S):**   N/A

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

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