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Los Angeles City Council Approves O'Farrell-Koretz Resolution Supporting Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

*If approved by the federal government, it will be the first Indigenous-led National Marine
Sanctuary designation in U.S. history*

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles City Council today unanimously approved a Resolution from Councilmembers Mitch O'Farrell (CD13) and Paul Koretz (CD5) that affirms the City's support for the Chumash tribe, one of three tribes indigenous to the Los Angeles area, regarding its proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designation from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"Los Angeles is leading the way on advancing environmental protections, and it is very important to me to elevate the voices of Indigenous communities," said **Councilmember O'Farrell**, the chair of the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice and River Committee, and the first Native American on the Los Angeles City Council. "Our waters, beaches and biodiversity are what make Los Angeles and all of Southern California unique and beautiful. We must do all we can to protect these local ecosystems, and we urge the federal government to approve this groundbreaking proposal from the Chumash."

"It makes good fiscal and environmental sense to protect California's coastal waters which attract millions of tourists annually. Marine-protected areas have time-and-again shown that giving nature a breather can have a tremendously beneficial healing effect on underwater biodiversity," said **Councilmember Koretz**, co-author of the resolution. "We must prioritize protection of native flora, fauna and Native cultures, because they are each vital to the future of California."

Los Angeles is located in the unceded traditional homelands of native peoples, including the Chumash, and also in the California Floristic Province, one of only 36 global biodiversity hotspots, meaning there is unique, endemic flora and fauna – all of which is threatened by human activities. In 2015, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council submitted a nomination for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) to the NOAA. In November 2021, the Biden Administration and NOAA formally advanced the proposed CHNMS into the designation process, a monumental step in a decades-long

effort to preserve sacred Chumash cultural sites, unique coastal waters, and biodiversity hotspots along the Central Coast of California.

Even with the steps taken by the Biden Administration, the matter is still pending with NOAA. If successful, it will be the first Indigenous-led National Marine Sanctuary designation in the history of the United States.

In recent years, the City of Los Angeles has been a national leader on environmental issues, including the adoption of “LA100,” the City’s strategic plan that will achieve 100% carbon-free energy by 2035, and the creation of the LA City Biodiversity Index to account for and preserve the City’s natural areas and wildlife.

O’Farrell, a citizen of the Wyandotte Nation, has led the City Council in adopting matters important to Native American communities, including the replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, last year’s adoption of the “Indigenous LAnd Initiative,” and the issuance of a formal apology from the City of Los Angeles to Native Americans.

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