

Resolution No. 16-08

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING OYSTER RESTORATION TO ENHANCE THE COSTAL NORTH CAROLOINA ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

WHEREAS, oysters and their habitats are part of the natural and cultural heritage of the North Carolina coast;

WHEREAS, healthy oysters filter the water, improving water quality and promoting clean and productive waters and fisheries;

WHEREAS, oyster reefs provide habitat for marine life;

WHEREAS, building new oyster reefs lessens wave action and reduces shoreline erosion;

WHEREAS, North Carolina's oyster population has shrunk to less than 10 percent of its historic range secondary to unsustainable harvesting depleting oyster beds; onshore development degrading habitat; and Dermo disease;

WHEREAS, by investing in oysters Virginia has dramatically grown its oyster industry in the last ten years, is now the number one oyster producing state on the East Coast, growing and harvesting nearly 6 times more oysters than North Carolina in 2015;

WHEREAS, Virginia promotes its oysters by creating "oyster trails" that have become important tourist attractions enjoyed by its coastal visitors;

WHEREAS, North Carolina has the second largest estuarine system in the United States, and with strategic investments our coast could lead in oyster production;

WHEREAS, reviving and restoring oysters will drive sustainable coastal economic development for the marine construction industry, fishermen, and tourism in Brunswick County and the rest of coastal North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Town of Holden Beach supports and endorses the strategic plans for oyster restoration developed by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries at the request of the N.C. General Assembly. These plans provide blueprints to create the Senator Jean Preston Oyster Sanctuary Network by 2026; enhance shellfish management areas; and encourage oyster aquaculture. The Town of Holden Beach encourages the N.C. General Assembly to fully invest in these strategic plans so that oysters once again become a significant environmental, economic and cultural asset in North Carolina.

This resolution is effective upon its adoption this 17th day of May, 2016.

J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

Heather Finnell, Town Clerk