

Resolution Calling for the Protection of Maury Island

WHEREAS Puget Sound is contaminated by pollutants, its fish, marine mammal and bird populations are in steep decline and its shorelines are developed and urbanized; and

WHEREAS the Washington State legislature views the restoration of Puget Sound to be such a high priority that it created a new state agency, the Puget Sound Partnership, to oversee its restoration with a multi-million dollar budget; and

WHEREAS the King County Democrats' platform pledges to assure a healthy environment for ourselves and future generations; and

WHEREAS the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve was designed to "conserve, preserve, restore, and/or enhance" the habitats and species that make up Maury Island, located within Puget Sound; and

WHEREAS Glacier Northwest, a subsidiary of Taiheiyo Cement, proposes expanding its gravel mining operation up to 750 fold and building a barge-loading facility within the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve; and

WHEREAS the proposed mine is on top of the aquifer which is Maury Island's primary drinking water source; and

WHEREAS the mine would reduce the permeable cover of the aquifer from approximately 200 feet to 15 feet, making the aquifer vulnerable to contamination and evaporation; and

WHEREAS the nearshore and offshore habitat of Maury Island is home to juvenile Chinook salmon and Puget Sound's southern resident orcas, both federally listed endangered species; and

WHEREAS the barge-loading facility and barge traffic would damage eelgrass beds necessary to Chinook salmon, the orca's primary food source, and herring, and would be disruptive to local orcas; and

WHEREAS it is much more effective to preserve natural habitat than to restore it after it is degraded;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the 45th District Democrats, urge our state legislators to support legislation prohibiting the expansion of Glacier Northwest's mining operation and the construction of a barge-loading facility on Maury Island; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge our state representatives to support legislation requiring the state's Department of Natural Resources to manage the area, conserve native habitats, protect and restore nearshore ecosystems, and provide for low-impact public use.