



# Association of Pacific Island Legislatures

American Samoa  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
FSM, State of Chuuk  
FSM, State of Kosrae  
FSM, State of Pohnpei  
FSM, State of Yap  
Island of Guam  
Republic of Kiribati  
Republic of the Marshall Islands  
Republic of Nauru  
Republic of Palau  
State of Hawaii

## A RESOLUTION

### APIL Resolution No. 35-GA-18

**“Recognizing the threats posed to coastal communities and their fisheries by large-scale industrial commercial harvesting of wild sea cucumbers and calling for the prohibition of large-scale commercial harvesting of wild sea cucumbers across the Pacific.”**

1           **WHEREAS**, sea cucumber populations across the Pacific and elsewhere have been  
2     decimated by large-scale commercial harvesting; and

3           **WHEREAS**, for the past few years, including this year for the first time, planned mass  
4     harvesting is happening in Pohnpei and Hawaii, a trend that has also occurred in other APIL  
5     member jurisdictions; and

6           **WHEREAS**, Pohnpei and Hawaii, like other protected fisheries in the Pacific, are the  
7     target for commercial interests, especially for traders willing to take extraordinary measures in  
8     order to get supplies; and

9           **WHEREAS**, a shortage of sea cucumbers worldwide has created escalating demands for  
10    these products, and since seventy percent of the Pacific fisheries are closed to the harvesting of sea  
11    cucumbers, the APIL understands why traders will not overlook its member jurisdictions; and

12          **WHEREAS**, the high demand and lucrative prices, combined with overstrained fishery  
13    management controls contribute to the spiraling decline of sea cucumber populations worldwide;  
14    and

15          **WHEREAS**, according to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), “many species  
16    remain unknown to science; for example, one commercially important species,

1 Hairy greyfish – *Actinopyga*, present only in Yap, Palau, and recently recorded in Pohnpei is yet to  
2 be identified. Limited knowledge is complicated by the variation in the naming systems (trade,  
3 scientific, and local names) used, where they live and the best way to assess them. Without  
4 underwater information, catch and export information are important; however, these are rarely  
5 collected. The challenge for Pacific island fisheries agencies is simply lack of a stronger  
6 management and monitoring system which stems from limited knowledge of these species, the  
7 same situation being faced by other FSM States;” and

8       **WHEREAS**, sea cucumbers play a vital role in the ocean ecosystem and food chain of  
9 near-shore fisheries, which are of paramount importance for food security, health and income of  
10 coastal Pacific populations; and

11       **WHEREAS**, as Pacific leaders, the members of the APIL urgently need to understand the  
12 impact of removing sea cucumbers and other invertebrates on the health and resilience of our reefs  
13 at a time when our reefs face an uncertain future due to climate change, persistent and  
14 unsustainable harvests, and other events and activities that contribute to the decline of coastal  
15 fisheries; and

16       **WHEREAS**, any effective protection and conservation of sea cucumbers across the Pacific  
17 requires a joint and concerted effort through the development of complementary policies and  
18 legislation; and

19       **WHEREAS**, the legislative leaders at the APIL represent the people of the Pacific, as  
20 members of our local communities, in recognizing the threat imposed on communities and our  
21 coastal resources by any large-scale harvesting of sea cucumbers; and


**WHEREAS**, in our role as legislative leaders, the APIL has supported conservation and management efforts in the fisheries sector due to the need to ensure the sustainable utilization of both pelagic and coastal resources; and


**WHEREAS**, it is the salient responsibility of the members of the APIL of the various islands of the Pacific to help advance legislation that will serve to conserve, protect and preserve the cultures, traditions, and livelihoods of the people of the Pacific now and for future generations; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, 35<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Island of Guam, June 1-3, 2016, that this Assembly does hereby recognize the threats posed to coastal communities and their fisheries by large-scale industrial commercial harvesting of wild sea cucumbers, and calls for the prohibition of large-scale commercial harvesting of wild sea cucumbers across the Pacific; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the APIL President shall certify and the APIL Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same shall be transmitted to the Chief Executives and the Legislative Presiding Officers of the respective National, State and Municipal governments and the Traditional Leaders of each member jurisdiction of the Association of the Pacific Islands Legislatures.

**DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2016.**

  
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**KENNETH A. KEDI**  
**PRESIDENT**

  
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**FERNANDO SCALIEM**  
**SECRETARY**

