



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

Resolution No. 38-GA-12

“To respectfully encourage APIL member states to develop a vision for the future of global plastic governance and to consult with their respective business sectors and local communities in the development of new laws, policies and programs that will effectively ban the use of single use plastic bags and other disposable plastic items in the Blue Continent within five years.”

1 **WHEREAS**, over eight million tons of plastic debris enter the world's oceans each year;
2 thereby requiring that the Member Jurisdictions of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures
3 which make up our region of the Pacific, often referred to as the Blue Continent, to come
4 together to develop a vision for the future of global plastic governance and local plastic refuse
5 regulation; and

6 **WHEREAS**, in March 2019, after five days of talks at the U.N. Environment Assembly
7 in Nairobi, a United Nations Resolution was passed condemning throwaway items like plastic
8 bags and compelling one hundred and seventy countries to pledge to "significantly reduce" the
9 use of plastics by 2030; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in support of the recent resolve of the United Nations and following the
11 lead of the 4,700 delegates who participated in the U.N. environmental assembly, including
12 environment ministers, scientists and business figures, it is the sense of the Association of Pacific
13 Island Legislatures that the Member Jurisdictions of the APIL should also encourage the United
14 States and foreign countries to identify effective policies and controls relative to ocean-polluting
15 practices which would, if put in place, strengthen their efforts to decrease the pollution of our
16 oceans, including the seas of the Blue Continent;; and

1 **WHEREAS**, in light of the fact that the vast majority of countries came together to
2 develop a vision for the future of global plastic governance as expressed in the U.N. Resolution,
3 so too can the members of the Blue Continent; and

4 **WHEREAS**, because the U.N. Assembly is the world's top international environment
5 body, and this pledge set the tone for the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit in September of 2018,
6 the APIL Member Jurisdictions may wish to consider the U.N.'s recommendations as to the best
7 format and forum for our respective Environmental Secretaries, Directors and Ministers to meet
8 together and organize themselves as an inclusive regional high-level dialogue platform on ocean
9 pollution caused by single use plastic bags and other plastic pollutants; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in contemplating our best approach in dealing with global ocean pollution,
11 we can all happily recall and cheerfully applaud the central role that our Micronesian leaders,
12 concerned with combating climate change played in the formation and ratification of the Paris
13 Accord and many other very important climate change conventions and protocols; and

14 **WHEREAS**, the visionary public addresses and appeals of the late Honorable Tony
15 Debrum and the heart felt recitations of the prophetic poetry at the U.N. Conference on Climate
16 Change by climate activist Kathy Jetnil Kijiner, both of whom hail from the Marshall Islands
17 where this General Assembly has convened, brought world-wide attention to the plight of the
18 low lying Micronesian Islands and made climate change references to Micronesia synonymous
19 with a world-wide recognition of the perils of the rising seas of global warming; and

20 **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures that because
21 of our heritage as Pacific Island peoples who are and have always been at one with the thousands
22 of miles of ocean that surround us, we can again become the beacon of light for the elimination

1 of ocean pollution around the world in similar manners that our island visionaries have come to
2 the center of the world stage on combating climate change; and

3 **WHEREAS**, while we are joining the fight to combat global ocean pollution that is
4 primarily caused by the lack of effective public policy and the careless indifference of the
5 biggest and most advanced nations of the world, we must also recognize that to obtain
6 international respect for our efforts to combat global ocean pollution, we as islanders must
7 recognize that we too are currently contributors to the problem; and

8 **WHEREAS**, while our ocean front beaches and shorelines are, in deed, being suffocated
9 by the refuse of others, our lagoons and internal waters are likewise being inundated with plastic
10 debris, but that debris is not a result of the ocean polluting practices of others. It is a result of our
11 own careless attitudes toward the devastating harms of marine and fresh water pollution; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in our vast mangrove forests hang the remnants of discarded pampers,
13 diapers, plastic bags and toiletries, and on the sides of our inland streams are the washed up
14 remnants of decaying bleach bottles, plastic food wrappers and empty water containers; and

15 **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures that while
16 we seek to address the world-wide challenges of ocean pollution, we should be simultaneously
17 be cleaning up our own back yards; and

18 **WHEREAS**, while it may not be possible to create one solution for all APIL Member
19 Jurisdictions in addressing our own unwise and uncaring polluting practices, the danger facing
20 our Blue Continent and our marine environment is at a turning point such that the members of
21 the APIL no longer need to just draft and send out verbose condemnation documents, but rather
22 we must actually and publicly embrace concrete commitments to ban the use of plastic bags and

1 other disposable plastic items within our jurisdictions significantly sooner than the 2030
2 deadline; but

3 **WHEREAS**, in our efforts to reach such lofty goals, we must be realistic in our approach
4 to banning the use of plastic bags and other disposable plastic items that stem from the behaviors
5 and lifestyles of our people. Bad habits are hard to break, and if the enactment of laws banning
6 the use of disposable plastics is not followed up by positive programs of implementation, the
7 legislation we enact will only be seen by our citizens as another unwanted legislative intrusion
8 into their lives; so

9 **WHEREAS**, let us, in passing the plastic ban laws, simultaneously bring about a
10 visionary image into the minds of business owners and consumers alike that it is really cool to
11 come into the store with a strong and fashionable tote bag capable of holding just about anything
12 we can gather up, rather than carrying our purchases out in flimsy, little white and yellow plastic
13 bags that have a tendency to split open unexpectedly when stuffed with heavy or sharp items
14 resulting in our newly purchased items crashing to the ground and breaking up into a hundred
15 useless fragments; now, therefore,

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, 38th General
17 Assembly, Republic of the Marshall Islands, July 23-26, 2019, that the Member Jurisdictions of
18 the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures are urgently requested to work collaboratively to
19 develop a vision for the future of global plastic governance as expressed in the UN Resolution
20 and are further urgently requested to consult with our respective business sectors and local
21 communities over the development of new laws, policies and programs that effectively ban the
22 use of single use plastic bags and other disposable plastic items within five years following the

1 adoption of this resolution in an effort to mitigate the damaging effects of plastic pollution in our
2 own marine and aquatic environments; and

3 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that those of us who are proving to be in the forefront
4 of our mutual efforts to overcome the dangers and harms of marine and fresh water pollution in
5 our own nations, states, territories and commonwealth are urged to share your secrets of your
6 successes with those of us in less fortunate island jurisdictions so that we may all move forward
7 as one in our shared goals to prevent marine and fresh water pollution, both globally and locally;
8 and

9 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that APIL President shall certify and the APIL
10 Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof and that copies of the same shall be transmitted to
11 the Chief Executives and the Presiding Legislative Officers of the Member Jurisdictions of the
12 Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures for the perusal of their respective branches of
13 government and to share with concerned NGO's and other environmental awareness groups.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 26TH DAY OF JULY, 2019.



NELSON STEPHEN
ACTING PRESIDENT



IVAN A. BLANCO
SECRETARY

