

1 [Opposing Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s Proposed Rule Regulating Dog Walking]

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3 **Resolution opposing Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s proposed rule regulating**  
4 **on- and off-leash dog walking in urban parklands throughout San Francisco, Marin, and**  
5 **San Mateo Counties.**

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7 WHEREAS, San Francisco is a densely populated urban environment where an  
8 estimated 120,000 dogs reside with their families; and

9 WHEREAS, Dogs require daily exercise to live healthy lives; and

10 WHEREAS, Many residents, including dog owners, live in homes with little to no  
11 outdoor space and often rely on public open space for recreation; and

12 WHEREAS, San Francisco has more than 220 parks administered by the San  
13 Francisco Recreation and Park Department, of which only 28 are designated dog play areas  
14 where dogs may play off-leash; and

15 WHEREAS, In addition to these dog play areas, many dog owners have also exercised  
16 their dogs for decades at popular locations under the jurisdiction of the Golden Gate National  
17 Recreation Area (GGNRA) and the National Park Service (NPS), such as Ocean Beach,  
18 Baker Beach, Crissy Field, Ft. Funston, Ft. Mason, Lands End, and Sutro Heights Park; and

19 WHEREAS, The GGNRA was established in 1972 as an urban park with a goal of  
20 making open space more available to a broader segment of the public and so that urban-  
21 dwelling families would not have to drive far to access open space; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1973, San Francisco voters turned over 500 additional acres of city  
23 parkland – including Ocean Beach, Ft. Funston and Lands End – to the GGNRA; and

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1           WHEREAS, Upon the transfer of these GGNRA lands in San Francisco from the City  
2 and County of San Francisco to the federal government, it was widely known that among  
3 other activities, dog walking, including off-leash dog walking, occurred at these sites; and

4           WHEREAS, In 1979, GGNRA created a Pet Policy after extensive public input that  
5 allowed dogs to be walked off-leash in areas including Ocean Beach, Ft. Funston, Crissy  
6 Field, Baker Beach, Lands End, Ft. Mason, and Ft. Miley in San Francisco; and Rodeo Beach,  
7 Muir Beach, and various trails in Marin, amounting to less than one percent of its land; and

8           WHEREAS, In 2002, GGNRA began conducting a planning process to determine the  
9 manner and extent of dog walking on their lands; and

10           WHEREAS, In 2011, GGNRA released its Draft Dog Management Plan/Environmental  
11 Impact Statement (DEIS), which severely restricted off-leash, voice-controlled dog walking  
12 and created large areas where dogs would not be allowed; and

13           WHEREAS, The DEIS received 4,700 responses and 8,000 substantive comments  
14 which overwhelmingly opposed the GGNRA plan; and

15           WHEREAS, In 2013, GGNRA released its Draft Dog Management Plan/Supplemental  
16 Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), a second draft of the DEIS which included only  
17 minor changes to the original plan, and that still severely restricted off-leash, voice-controlled  
18 dog walking and created large areas where dogs would not be allowed at all; and

19           WHEREAS, In 2011 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution  
20 No. 183-11, and in 2013 adopted Resolution No. 386-13, both opposing GGNRA's proposed  
21 off-leash policy outlined in the preferred alternative of the DEIS and SEIS and supporting the  
22 ongoing dialogue between GGNRA and San Francisco; and

23           WHEREAS, Both the San Mateo and Marin County Board of Supervisors have also  
24 unanimously opposed these proposed regulations; and

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1           WHEREAS, In 2014, GGNRA began implementing modifications to its dog regulations  
2 when it created interim public use restrictions and permit requirements for commercial dog  
3 walkers, limiting them to no more than 6 dogs at any time, including a requirement that they  
4 must obtain a permit from NPS when walking four to six dogs at any one time; and

5           WHEREAS, These restrictions are in direct conflict with San Francisco’s commercial  
6 dog walking policy that allows up to eight dogs at one time, and puts further pressure on our  
7 city parklands; and

8           WHEREAS, On February 24, 2016, GGNRA released its Proposed Rule for Dog  
9 Management in the GGNRA, which is based on the Preferred Alternative described in the  
10 SEIS; and

11           WHEREAS, Despite overwhelming opposition to the Preferred Alternative from  
12 residents, community groups and elected representatives across several counties, the  
13 Proposed Rule contains only minor adjustments based on public feedback; and

14           WHEREAS, The Proposed Rule states that many Bay Area residents “view GGNRA  
15 lands as their backyards” and that dog walking is in direct conflict with those that expect a  
16 visitor experience “free from dogs;” and

17           WHEREAS, The Proposed Rule would designate specific areas where dogs would be  
18 required to stay on leash, areas where dogs may be off-leash but under voice and sight control,  
19 and areas where dog walking would be prohibited; and

20           WHEREAS, Under the Proposed Rule, only 2.7 of the 8.7 miles of beaches (31%)  
21 would be available for dog walkers, and only 2.3 miles (26%) would be available for off-leash  
22 use; and

23           WHEREAS, Large portions of Ocean Beach, Crissy Field, Baker Beach, Lands End,  
24 Sutro Heights Park, and Ft. Funston will now have restrictions that limit access for both on  
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1 and off-leash dog use, and will also have large areas where dogs are no longer allowed at all;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, The Proposed Rule also allows for additional closures or restrictions to be  
4 placed on areas or portions thereof which are open to on-leash or off-leash dog walking on a  
5 temporary or permanent basis; now, therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco opposes GGNRA's Proposed  
7 Rule for Dog Management and urges GGNRA to modify these regulations to allow for greater  
8 access to recreational opportunities such as dog walking; and, be it

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco reiterates its belief  
10 that the GGNRA is an urban recreation area and not a remote national park and that the  
11 GGNRA should be managed to best serve residents and visitors; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this legislation be sent to GGNRA  
13 Superintendent Christine Lehnertz, National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis, San Francisco  
14 Recreation and Park Director Phil Ginsburg, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks  
15 Commission, San Francisco Animal Care and Control Director Virginia Donohue, U.S.  
16 Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy  
17 Pelosi, Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Chairman of the  
18 U.S. House Subcommittee on Federal Lands, Tom McClintock, Ranking Minority Member of the  
19 U.S. House Subcommittee on Federal Lands, Niki Tsongas, Chairman of the U.S. House  
20 Natural Resources Committee Rob Bishop, and Ranking Minority Member of the U.S. House  
21 Natural Resources Committee Raul Grijalva.

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