

COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

Proclamation

WHEREAS *World Manta Day is September 17, 2022 - a special day created to celebrate manta rays and to raise awareness of the threats that these beautiful, mysterious, ocean giants face; and*

WHEREAS *the theme of this year's World Manta Day is EDUCATION. Knowledge is power and by raising awareness of manta rays, their relatives, and their precious habitats we can develop strategies to protect these special creatures; and*

WHEREAS *manta rays are found throughout the tropical and sub-tropical oceans of the world. A distant cousin of the shark, manta rays have a skeleton made of cartilage rather than bone. Despite their huge size, mantas feed on microscopic plankton and are amazingly docile creatures loved by scuba divers and snorkelers alike; and*

WHEREAS, *sadly, manta ray populations around the world are under threat and their numbers are failing in many regions. Threats include capture (for consumption and traditional medicine), entanglement in fishing nets, unregulated tourism (driving manta rays away from an important cleaning and feeding sites) and climate change (changes in sea temperature threaten both the food supply and habitat); and*

WHEREAS *the Kona Coast of Hawai'i Island is home to over 240 resident manta rays, each identified and named. Much like a fingerprint is unique to each human, manta rays have distinguishing black and white markings used in identification; and*

WHEREAS *Manta Pacific Research Foundation based in Kailua-Kona, is a non-profit organization with a mission to study manta rays in their natural habitat, conduct scientific research, provide educational programs for the public about manta rays and the marine environment, and to establish and promote global manta ray conservation.*

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mitchell D. Roth, Mayor of the County of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim September 17, 2022, as

WORLD MANTA RAY DAY

in the County of Hawai'i and encourage all citizens to become advocates for manta rays by supporting organizations working towards making our oceans cleaner, safer, and healthier through research, conservation, and education.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused The Seal of the County of Hawai'i to be affixed. Done this 17th day of September 2022, in Hilo, Hawai'i.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mitchell D. Roth".

MITCHELL D. ROTH

Mayor