

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

16th Legislature
Session

7th Regular

PUERTO RICO SENATE

S. R. 2644

March 8, 2012

Introduced by *Mrs. Romero-Donnelly*

Referred to

RESOLUTION

To express the absolute support of the Puerto Rico Senate, in all efforts to achieve the designation of the Mona and Monito Islands Natural Reserve, as a “Marine Protected Area” of the Federal Government.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The Puerto Rico Senate, in their quest to preserve our resources and recognize the natural beauty of our islands, has the honor to acknowledge the very significant value represented in the Mona and Monito Islands Natural Reserve, designated as such in 1986 by the Puerto Rico Planning Board, under the Designation Document Resolution PU-02.

This natural reserve is classified as one of the most important in Puerto Rico and is considered a natural and historical heritage, unique in its class. This Senate feels more than proud to recognize this great legacy that enjoys a high international recognition, due to its scientific, historical, cultural, archaeological and geological value. This Natural Reserve is managed by the Department of Natural and

Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico (DRNA, *by his acronym in Spanish*), and it has a pristine and wild nature of unsurpassed beauty. Mona Island has huge cliffs that penetrate big deeps, surrounded by beautiful reefs, provides a barrier to protect the east and west of the southern coast waves, enclosing coastal lagoons. On those islands we can find a variety of corals, of both types, hard and soft. Mona Island is one of the most important ecosystems in the Caribbean and has a great biological diversity with unique species, some prehistoric, heavenly beaches of white sand, crystal clear waters, deep interconnected caverns, pictograms and Taino petroglyphs, extraordinary coral reefs and 200 meters of vertical drop cliffs.

Since 1919 the Mona Island has received several special designations, on that year the reserve was designated as an **Insular Forest**, by the Federal Department of the Interior, in 1975 was designated as a **National Natural Landmark** by the U.S. Department of the Interior who in 1985 designated it as **Critical Habitat: For the Mona Boa, Mona Lizard and Hawksbill Turtle**, in 1993, Mona was appointed by the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a **National Historic Landmark**, in 1997 it was appointed by the Planning Board of Puerto Rico as a **Maritime Boundaries Extension (9 nautical miles)**, in 1998 it was designated as **Historic Site** by the Institute of Culture of Puerto Rico and as **Critical Habitat Waters that Surround the Islands of Mona and Monito** by the "National Marine Fisheries Service" (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce .

In late October, last year 2011, the Natural Reserve of Mona and Monito Islands was nominated by the Department of Natural Resources of Puerto Rico as a "Marine Protected Area" under the federal system. The Puerto Rico Senate recognizes the high ecological and cultural value that this precious natural reserve represents to us and to our future generations. It is the obligation of this Senate, to fully support all efforts towards the adequate preservation of our ecological resources. Global warming, high levels of the greenhouse effect, deforestation, excessive and constant

increase in the extinction of species, makes it crucial, meritorious and necessary to conserve our natural resources. It is our sincere interest that this nomination become a reality and that the Mona and Monito Island Natural Reserve be allowed to endure through generations.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF PUERTO RICO:

1 Section 1. - To express the absolute support of the Puerto Rico Senate, in all
2 efforts to achieve the designation of the Mona and Monito Islands Natural Reserve,
3 as a “Marine Protected Area” of the Federal Government.

4 Section 2. - A copy of this resolution will be delivered to the Federal "National
5 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration" (NOAA), the Puerto Rico Department of
6 and the news media in Puerto Rico for its information and dissemination.

7 Section 3. - This Resolution shall take effect immediately after its approval.

