**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 1‑1‑713 SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE NORTHERN RIGHT WHALE AS THE OFFICIAL STATE MARINE MAMMAL OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1, Title 1 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 1‑1‑713. (A) The General Assembly finds:

(1) The northern right whale (Eubalaena glacialis) is among the rarest of all marine mammals. The right whale’s existence has been threatened since whale hunters first designated it the ‘right whale’ to hunt, because it is rich in blubber and swims and rests very close to both the surface and shore. The whale’s oil was used in lamps and perfume; its baleen for buggy whips, umbrella ribs, corset stays, hair brushes, and many other articles. By the late 1800’s there were so few right whales left that hunting them was no longer profitable. Today, it is critically endangered with only about three hundred fifty remaining in the Atlantic Ocean. Although hunting the northern right whale has been illegal for almost one hundred years, their numbers are not increasing. Because northern right whales are slow to mature and reproduce, the loss of even one right whale has an enormous impact on the prospects for the survival of the entire species.

(2) Northern right whales, which can grow up to fifty‑five feet in length and weigh up to seventy tons, seasonally migrate along the eastern seaboard and are known to utilize the warm coastal waters off South Carolina as one of their few remaining calving areas. Scientists have recently spotted as many as twenty of these endangered animals off the coast of South Carolina, including both newborns and expectant females, making the protection of these majestic marine mammals an issue of considerable concern and interest to South Carolinians.

(B) The northern right whale (Eubalaena glacialis) is designated as the official State Marine Mammal of South Carolina.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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