

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE EASTERN HELLBENDER'S ENDANGERED LISTING

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WHEREAS, on December 12th, 2024, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a proposal to list the eastern hellbender as an endangered species throughout its range under the Endangered Species Act.; and,

WHEREAS, as part of that process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will begin to accept public comments for a 60-day period as a part of that listing; and,

WHEREAS, Buncombe County views the Endangered Species Act and the listing of species as key to the preservation of biodiversity across the country and believes in its core purpose; and,

WHEREAS, the impacts of Hurricane Helene have damaged the natural environment across Appalachia, destroying and polluting essential habitat, which will require governmental investment and intervention to repair and stabilize; and,

WHEREAS, Buncombe County is home to eastern hellbender populations and tributaries of the French Broad, and has consistently sought to improve water quality, streambanks, and conserve the natural environment to safeguard habitat for the wildlife in our County; and,

WHEREAS, Buncombe County is the elected representative body of the 269,000+ citizens in our community, many of which are committed to the preservation and protection of the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it; and,

WHEREAS, Buncombe County has the duty to express its full and unwavering support for the endangered listing proposal for the eastern hellbender, so we can preserve this important species for future generations; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Buncombe County Commission, North Carolina as follows:

1. Submits this resolution to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an official public comment and stance of North Carolina's 7<sup>th</sup> largest County & that is home to eastern hellbenders; and,
2. That this resolution is sent to our Members of Congress, Representative Edwards and Senators Budd and Tillis displaying our support for this federal policy and listing as key for successful conservation.

Adopted this 4th day of February, 2025.

ATTEST

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Gross, Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amanda Edwards, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Attorney