
AN ACT

To establish a no-wake zone and a no-boat zone in the German Channel for the protection of manta rays as well as tourists; to require large boats to anchor on designated mooring buoys; to prohibit the installation of any mooring within 100 feet of a cleaning station; to require snorkelers to swim with fins; to prohibit tagging of manta rays in Koror State waters; to provide for penalties for violations of this Act, and for related purposes.

THE PEOPLE OF KOROR REPRESENTED IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF KOROR DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **Section 1. Short title.**

2 This Act shall be known as the Manta Ray Conservation Act.

3 **Section 2. Findings.**

4 The Tenth Koror State Legislature (the "Legislature") hereby finds that the habitat of the
5 Ouklemedaol at the German Channel is threatened by an ever growing number of tourists wishing
6 to experience these majestic manta rays. In May of 2015, a comprehensive study of the manta
7 rays in the German Channel was completed by David Prieto of Columbia University. The
8 Legislature finds that this study was an important analysis of the great financial benefit that the
9 State of Koror receives based on the tourism industry for manta rays, contributing \$6.8 million to
10 the Palauan economy in 2013 alone, while making clear that the manta rays in the German
11 Channel are being routinely disturbed and may decide to abandon the German Channel, much like
12 the manta rays in the Maldives and Yap have abandoned their common sites. In Yap, the mantas
13 had all together abandoned the Mi'il channel dive site resulting in one year without seeing any
14 mantas, a loss of \$7.8 million for Yap. A 2014 study conducted by Koike *et al*, of the Palau
15 International Coral Reef Center found that the manta rays ranked first amongst marine species of
16 interest for people that came to Palau, making this a flagship species for Palau and the State of
17 Koror.

18 The purpose of this Act is therefore two-fold; on the one hand it is to preserve the manta
19 ray population at the German Channel and on the other hand to increase the satisfaction of the
20 tourists visiting this area to view the manta rays, both of which can be accomplished by restricting
21 the way that boats travel across and moor at the German Channel. The Legislature finds that

