

# **BELIZE**

**No. HR40/1/13**

## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024

10:00 AM

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### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

1. **Prayers.**

3. **Announcements by the Speaker.**

7. **Presentation of Reports from Select Committees.**

No. HR278/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Government of Belize and Social Security Board Settlement Deed Bill, 2024.

No. HR279/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Financial Services Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR280/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Securities Industry (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR281/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Income and Business Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR282/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Tax Administration and Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR283/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR284/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Business Names (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

No. HR285/1/13 - Report from the Finance and Economic Development Committee on the Designated Processing Areas

(Amendment) Bill, 2024.

*(The Honourable Chairperson of the Finance and Economic Development Committee)*

No. HR286/1/13 - Report from the Health and Human Development Committee on the Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

*(The Honourable Chairperson of the Health and Human Development Committee)*

No. HR287/1/13 - Report from the Public Service, Labour, Industry, and Trade Committee on the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

*(The Honourable Chairperson of the Public Service, Labour, Industry, and Trade Committee)*

No. HR288/1/13 - Report from the Natural Resources and Environment Committee on the Resolution for the Expansion of the Protection of Belize's Total Ocean Space and the Medium Bio-Diversity Protection Zones Motion, 2024.

*(The Honourable Chairperson of the Natural Resources and Environment Committee)*

No. HR289/1/13 - Report from the Tourism, Archaeology, and Information Committee on the National Institute of Culture and History (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

*(The Honourable Chairperson of the Tourism, Archaeology, and Information Committee)*

13. **Motions relating to the Business or Sittings of the House.**

14. **Public Business.**

**A. Government Business**

**I MOTION** *(For Text of Motion see Notice Paper attached)*

1. **Resolution for the Expansion of the Protection of Belize's Total Ocean Space and the Medium Bio-Diversity Protection Zones Motion, 2024.**

*(referred 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024.)*

*(The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Civil Aviation, and Immigration)*

## II BILLS FOR SECOND READING

### 1. Government of Belize and Social Security Board Settlement Deed Bill 2024.

Bill for an Act to facilitate the implementation of the terms of deed of settlement between the Government of Belize and the Social Security Board to settle and to set-off certain debt obligations as between them that remain outstanding subsequent to Government of Belize's 2009 and 2011 compulsory acquisition and re-acquisition Sunshine Holdings Ltd as well as the shares owned by Sunshine Holdings Ltd in Belize Telecommunications Limited for the BTL Employees Trust; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

### 2. Financial Services Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Bill for an Act to amend the Financial Services Commission Act, Act No. 8 of 2023; to provide for the Chairperson of the Appeal Panel to be the Chief Justice, a Judge of the High Court or an Attorney-at-Law with the qualifications of a judge of the High Court; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

### 3. Securities Industry (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Bill for an Act to amend the Securities Industry Act, Act No. 46 of 2021; to provide for appeals of decisions of the Commission to be made to the Appeal Panel under the Financial Services Commission Act; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

### 4. Income and Business Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Bill for an Act to amend the Income and Business Tax Act, Chapter 55 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to exempt certain employed individuals from chargeability to income tax; to remove income tax deduction anomalies; to remove the tax on interest income on time deposits; to apply double tax treaty relief provisions to all treaty countries, not just Commonwealth countries; to encourage UK pensioners to reside in Belize; to regularize withholding of tax on gross contract payments; to incentivize private sector support of sports and educational development in Belize; to make clarifying amendments; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

### 5. Tax Administration and Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Bill for an Act to amend the Tax Administration and Procedure Act, Chapter 51 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to improve tax administration and enhance tax compliance; to enable electronic tax invoicing; to make clarifying amendments; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

6. **General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the General Sales Tax Act, Chapter 63 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to enable electronic tax invoicing; to make clarifying amendments; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

7. **Business Names (Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the Business Names Act, Chapter 247 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to make a Certificate of Registration valid for one year; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

8. **Designated Processing Areas (Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the Designated Processing Areas Act, Chapter 280 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to accommodate the continued development of the Global Digital Services Sector; to incentivise and further support the Aquaculture Sector; to establish a Special Border Entertainment Zone; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*(The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Civil Aviation, and Immigration)*

9. **National Institute of Culture and History (Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the National Culture and History Act, Chapter 331 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to strengthen the power of the National Institute of Culture and History to protect and preserve resources in reserves; to standardize the definition of Minister throughout the Act; to provide stricter penalties for offences; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*(The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science, and Technology)*

10. **Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the Marriage Act, Chapter 174 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to increase the age of marriage to eighteen years; to remove provisions for consent to marriage of infants to be given by parents or guardians; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*(The Honourable Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs)*

11. **Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority  
(Amendment) Bill, 2024.**

Bill for an Act to amend the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority Act, Chapter 38 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020; to provide for independent union membership on the Board of Governors; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*(The Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness)*

**III COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON BILLS**

**IV BILLS FOR THIRD READING**



**BELIZE**

**No. HR40/1/13**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024

10:00 AM

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**NOTICES OF QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS**

**MOTION**

1. **Resolution for the Expansion of the Protection of Belize’s Total Ocean Space and the Medium Bio-Diversity Protection Zones Motion, 2024.**

(referred 18.10.24)

**WHEREAS**, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Government of Belize and The Nature Conservancy finalized a debt conversion transaction and signed the Belize Blue Loan Agreement (BLA) and the Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA), collectively known as the Belize Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation;

**AND WHEREAS**, the BLA and CFA are contingent on the delivery of Eight Primary Conservation Commitments/Targets and an agreed payment schedule to be realized by the Government of Belize by the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the agreements;

**AND WHEREAS**, Clause one of the CFA outlines Belize’s obligations to complete a legally enforceable Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) and designate up to 30 percent of its Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones and outlines the seven (7) legally binding commitments to be achieved through the delivery of the MSP;

**AND WHEREAS**, as of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Government of Belize has successfully delivered Milestones 1, 2, and 3 and is expected to achieve Milestone 4 by November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024;

**AND WHEREAS**, Milestone 4 of the CFA states that *“No later than three (3) years after signing the Agreement, the National Assembly shall approve, and the Government shall formally sign into law and Gazette Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs) covering a total of 25% of its Ocean.”*;

**AND WHEREAS**, to date Belize has legally designated 20.05% or 669,046 hectares (6,690.46 km<sup>2</sup>) of its Total Ocean Space (3,336,789 hectares or 33,367.89 km<sup>2</sup>) as Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs);

**AND WHEREAS**, to meet the Milestone 4 target, a minimum of 166,965 hectares (1669.65 km<sup>2</sup>) or 5.00% of Belize’s Ocean space is being proposed to be further designated as Medium Protection Biodiversity Zones as follows:

<b>BELIZE PROTECTION FOR BIODIVERSITY ZONES STATS</b>		
	Area (km2)	%
<b>Total Ocean Space</b>	<b>33706.990070</b>	
<b>Terrestrial area</b>	<b>339.102061</b>	
<b>Total Ocean Space without terrestrial areas</b>	<b>33367.898730</b>	
<b>Total Marine Protected Areas</b>	<b>6840.434958</b>	
<b>Marine Protected Areas without terrestrial areas</b>	<b>6690.457755</b>	<b>20.05%</b>
High Biodiversity Protection Zone (without terrestrial areas)	3894.964545	11.67%
Medium Biodiversity Protection Zone (without terrestrial areas)	2795.493210	8.38%
<b>Proposed Medium Biodiversity Protection Zones</b>	<b>1669.649288</b>	<b>5.00%</b>
Lighthouse Reef General Use II	720.562325	2.16%
Lighthouse Reef General Use I	507.447885	1.52%
Glover's Reef General Use Zone (Expansion)	261.649800	0.78%
Bacalar Chico General Use Zone (Expansion)	179.989278	0.54%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8360.107043</b>	<b>25.05%</b>

**AND WHEREAS**, the CFA obligates Belize to protect up to 30% of its total ocean space as 15% High Protection Biodiversity Zones (no take) and 15% Medium Protection Biodiversity Zones (general use);

**AND WHEREAS**, the proposed 5.00% expansion will be designated as **Medium Protection Biodiversity Zones** which are described in the Conservation Funding Agreement as “*zones suitable for some level of extraction and sea-bed alteration, with appropriate management and direction, depending on the objective of each designated area*”;

**AND WHEREAS**, the Conservation Funding Agreement stipulates that the identification and designation of new biodiversity protection zones within Belize’s ocean space is to be guided through a science-based and stakeholder-driven Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process which takes into account the ecological, economic, and social considerations within Belize’s blue space;

**AND WHEREAS**, as per maps attached, these zones were identified through the ongoing national Marine Spatial Planning Process and represent areas that (i) have current and historical support from stakeholders; (ii) a strong scientific basis for their biodiversity and ecosystems functionality and connectivity and benefit to the wider Belize Barrier Reef System; (iii) economic significance and importance to people and livelihoods; and (iv) complement ongoing management efforts and objectives identified in existing management plans and legislation;

**AND WHEREAS**, the delivery of Milestone 4 is co-led by the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute and the Belize Fisheries Department through targeted stakeholder engagement employing a transparent, inclusive and equitable process in accordance with global MSP best practices and Section (14) 1-6 of the Fisheries Resources Act No.7 of 2020;

**AND WHEREAS**, the process spanned 11 months of extensive data collection, analysis and participatory mapping and the stakeholder consultation process included 31 meetings with a total of 497 participants representing 16 stakeholder groups including Academia, Aquaculture & Mariculture, Coastal Development, Community-Based Organizations,

Donor Organizations, Fishing Industry Post-harvest, Fishing Industry Wild Capture, Government Ministries, Government & Statutory Bodies, International Conservation Organizations, Media and Communications, MPA Co- Managers, National Conservation Organizations, Social Development Organizations, Tourism & Recreation, and the Public;

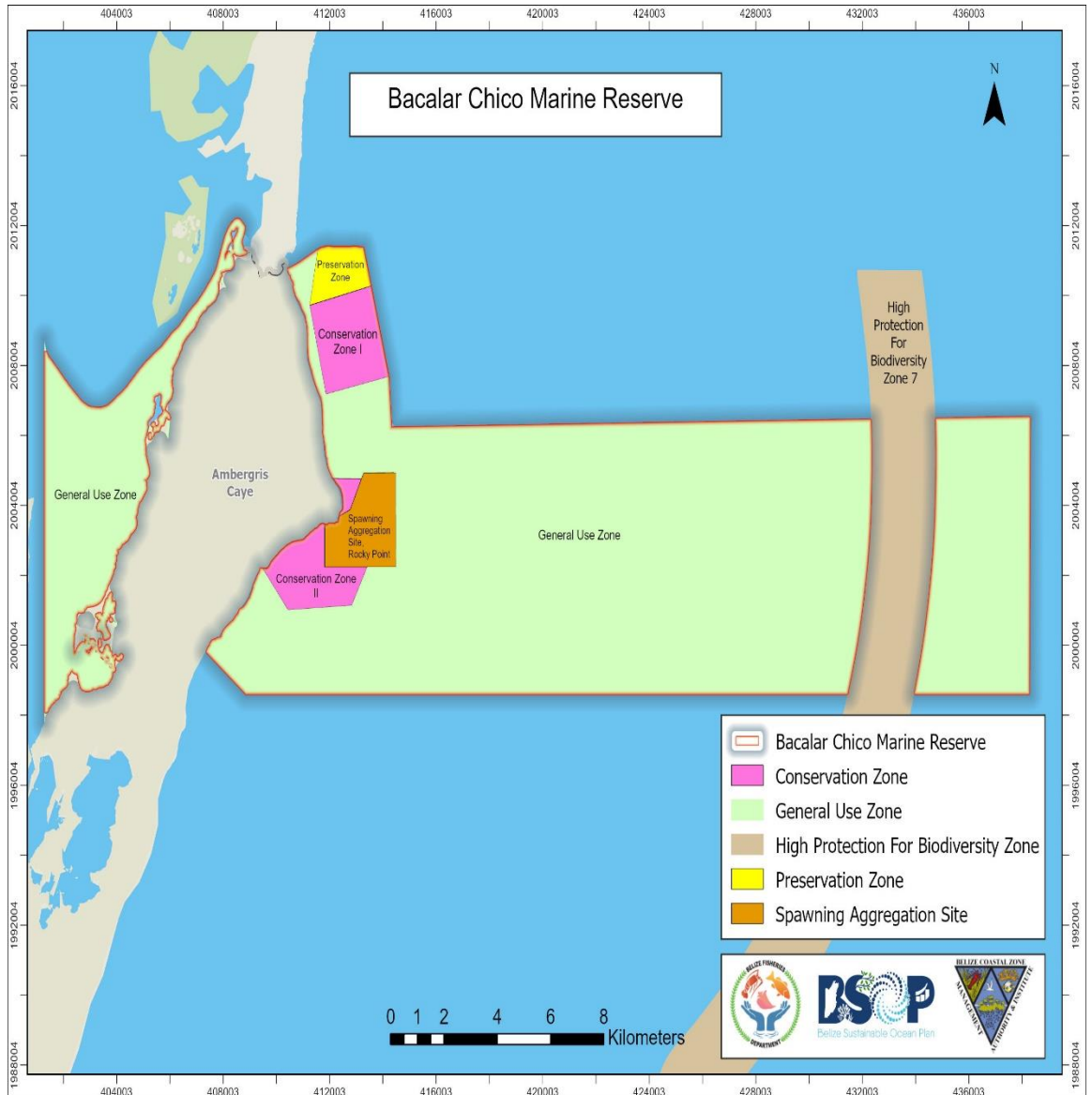
**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House being satisfied of the need for Belize's obligations to complete a legally enforceable Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) and designate up to 30 percent of its Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones, approves the expansion of the protection of Belize's Total Ocean Space and the designation of its Medium Bio-Diversity Protection Zones covering a total of 25% of its Ocean.

*(The Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Civil Aviation, and Immigration)*

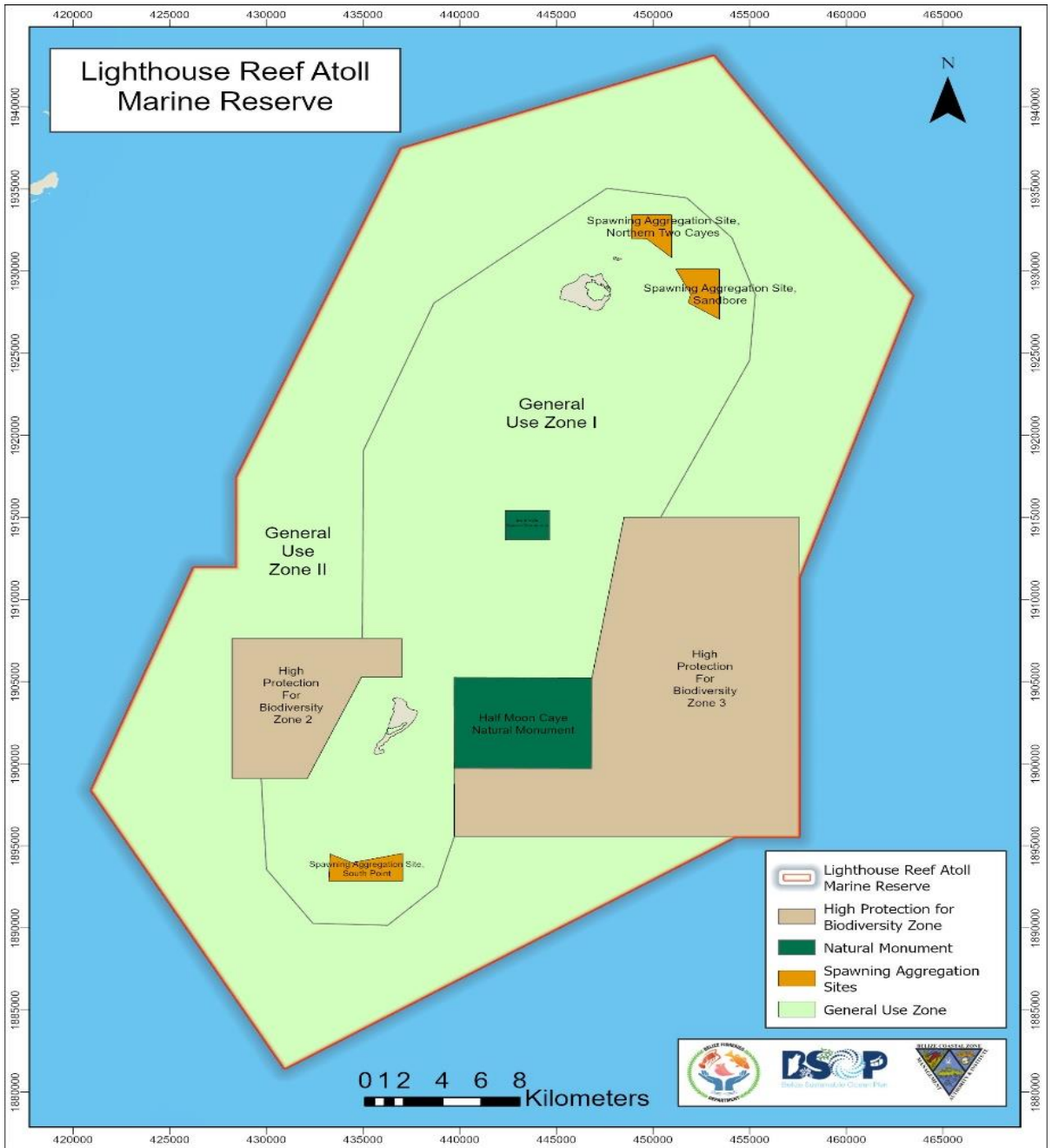


**ATTACHMENTS TO THE RESOLUTION FOR THE  
EXPANSION OF THE PROTECTION OF BELIZE'S TOTAL  
OCEAN SPACE AND THE MEDIUM BIO-DIVERSITY  
PROTECTION ZONES MOTION, 2024.**

**MAP 1- BACALAR CHICO MARINE RESERVE HIGHLIGHTING  
PROPOSED EXPANSION**



### MAP 2 – LIGHTHOUSE REEF ATOLL MARINE RESERVE HIGHLIGHTING PROPOSED EXPANSION



**MAP 3 – GLOVER’S REEF MARINE RESERVE HIGHLIGHTING PROPOSED EXPANSION**

