

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

**WHEREAS**, on 4<sup>th</sup> November 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 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the Government of Belize has successfully delivered Milestones 1, 2, and 3 and is expected to achieve Milestone 4 by the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 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 (km <sup>2</sup> )	%
<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;

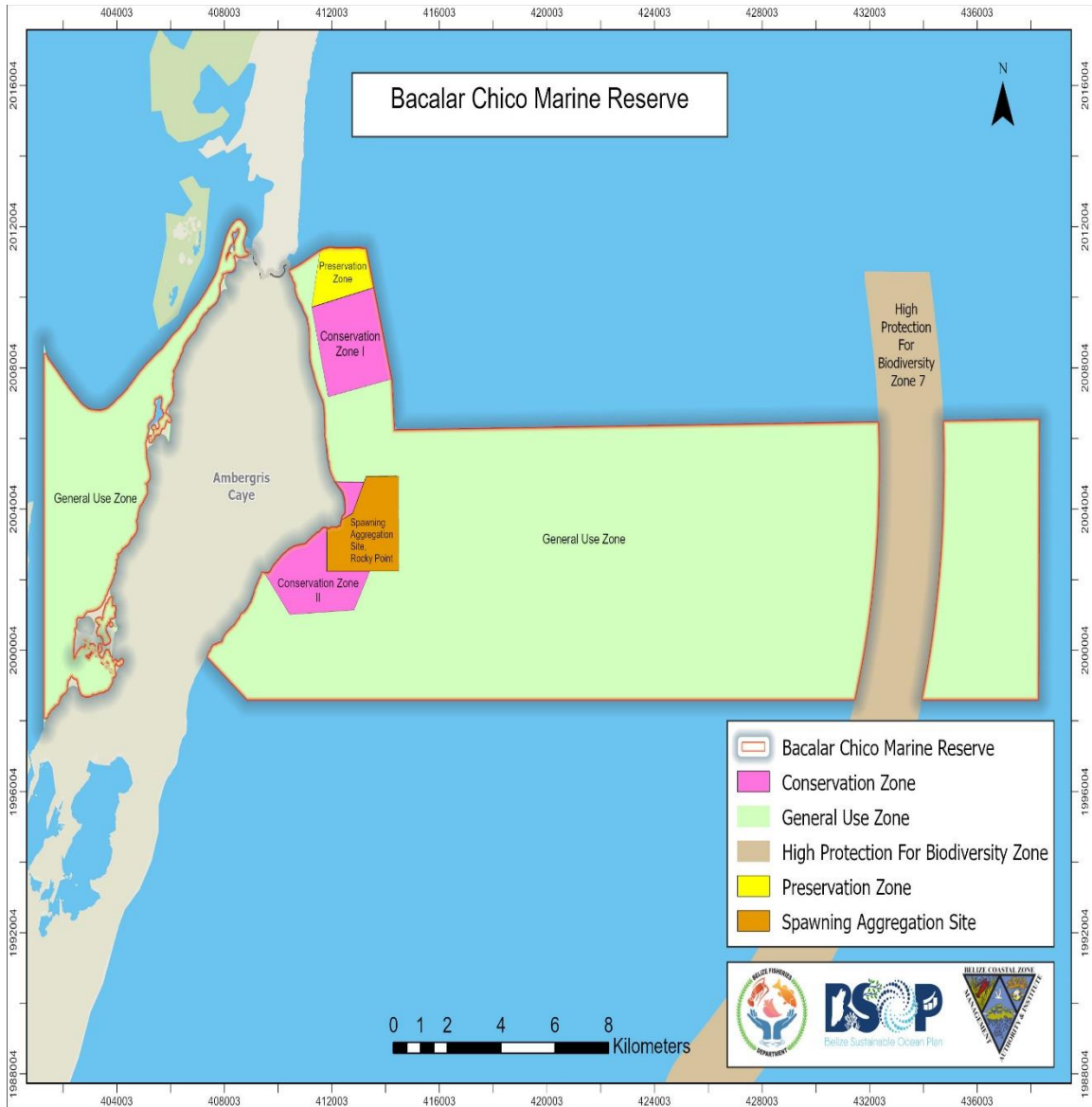
**AND WHEREAS**, the delivery of Milestone 4 is co-led by the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute and the Belize Fisheries Department through targeted stakeholder engagement employing a transparent, inclusive and equitable process in accordance with global MSP best practices and section (14) (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 and Mariculture, Coastal Development, Community-Based Organizations, Donor Organizations, Fishing Industry Post-harvest, Fishing Industry Wild Capture, Government Ministries, Government and Statutory Bodies, International Conservation Organizations, Media and Communications, MPA Co-Managers, National Conservation Organizations, Social Development Organizations, Tourism and Recreation, and the Public;

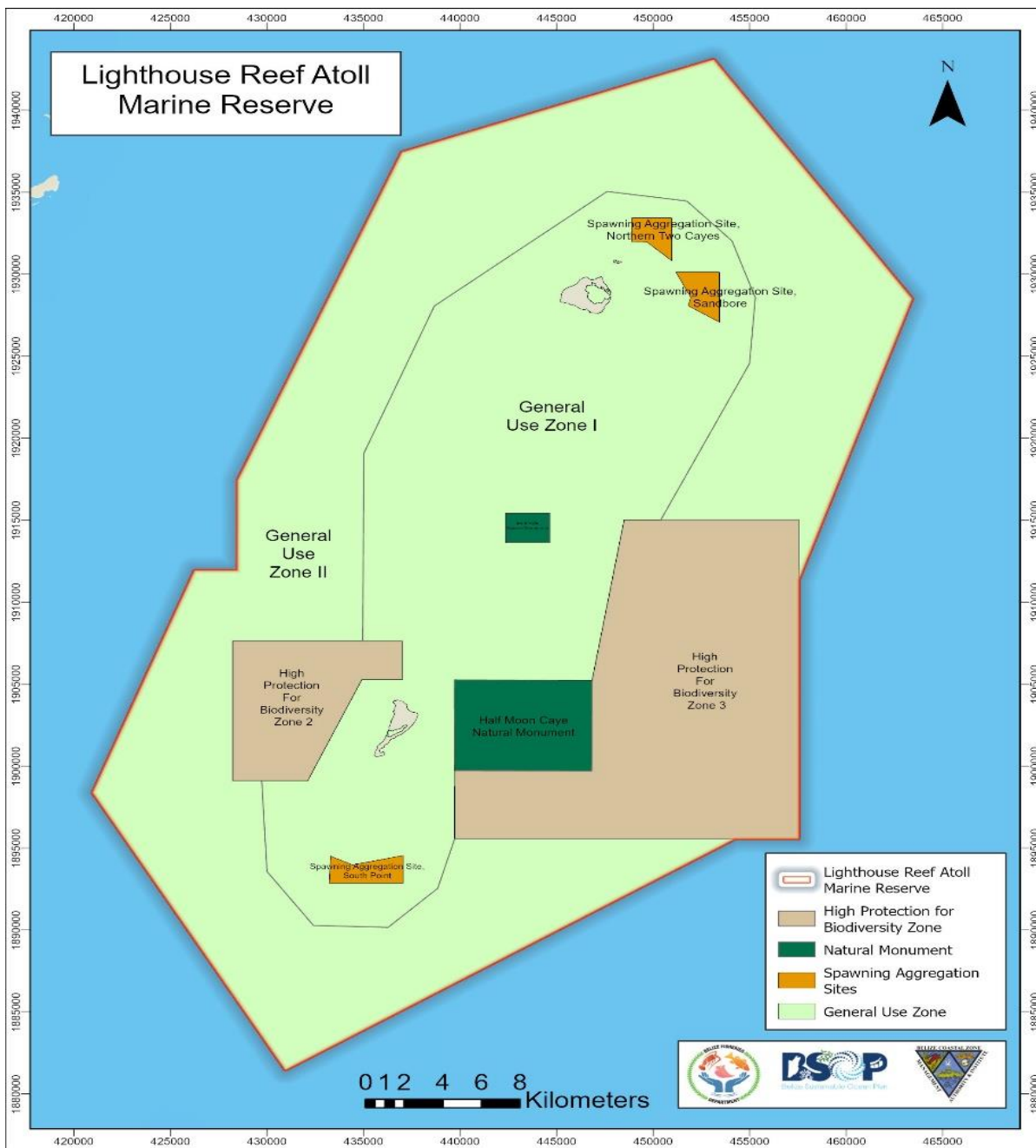
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that this Honourable House being satisfied of the need for Belize’s obligations to complete a legally enforceable Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) and designate up to 30 percent of its Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones, approves the expansion of the protection of Belize’s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

# TTACHMENTS 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

