

Amy Trotter

**Resolution #23**

**Submitted by:** Patrick Hogan, Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** September 2020 MUCC Annual Convention  
**Title:** Ban Balloon Release

**WHEREAS,** Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) mission is “Uniting citizens to conserve, protect, and enhance Michigan’s natural resources and outdoor heritage;” and

1 **WHEREAS,** MUCC Organizational Values are:

- 2           o Foster a conservation stewardship ethic in the public
- 3           o Protect the rights of the public to hunt, fish, trap and recreate outdoors
- 4           o Encourage the public to connect to our resources through active recreation
- 5           o Advocate for sustainable conservation practices and resource stewardship through sound
- 6           scientific management; and

7 **WHEREAS,** The Alliance for the Great Lakes' annual "Adopt-a-Beach" shoreline cleanup program has  
8 found between 4,400 and 7,200 balloons or pieces of balloon debris on Great Lakes beaches each of the  
9 last three years; and

10 **WHEREAS,** a scientific study published in March out of the University of Tasmania that found balloons  
11 are the highest-risk plastic debris item for seabirds — 32 times more likely to kill them than ingesting  
12 hard plastics; and

13 **WHEREAS,** balloons can be filled with gas lighter than air, or ride thermals and travel up to a thousand  
14 miles when released; and

15 **WHEREAS,** the Great Lakes cover an area of 94,250 square miles, allowing more balloon debris to  
16 come back to the surface due the lack of thermals over bodies of water; and

17 **WHEREAS,** balloons pose a threat to our waterfowl, our non-game birds, and ruin the aesthetics of our  
18 natural resources that everyone enjoys; and

19 **WHEREAS,** Balloon releases are simply sanctioned littering events; and

20 **WHEREAS**, according to NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT  
21 451 of 1994 section 324.8905a littering is a state civil infraction with appropriate fines

22 (1) A person who violates this part, if the amount of the litter is less than 1 cubic foot in volume,  
23 is responsible for a state civil infraction and is subject to a civil fine of not more than \$800.00.

24 (2) A person who violates this part, if the amount of the litter is 1 cubic foot or more but less than  
25 3 cubic feet in volume, is responsible for a state civil infraction and is subject to a civil fine of not  
26 more than \$1,500.00; and

27 **WHEREAS**, many organizations (National Wildlife Federation, United States Fish and Wildlife Service,  
28 Balloons Blow, etc.) are pushing the message that balloon releases can cause harm, but there is little to no  
29 enforcement of littering laws or legal restrictions to back this message; and

30 **WHEREAS**, California, Connecticut, Florida, Tennessee and Virginia currently have legal restrictions.  
31 While Arizona, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and  
32 Maine have legislation introduced to restrict releases; NOW,

33 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Michigan United Conservations Clubs use the strength of its  
34 40,000 plus hunters, anglers, trappers and conservationists and over 200 affiliated local clubs around the  
35 state to oppose commercial, or public balloon releases; and

36 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that MUCC work with our national affiliate National Wildlife  
37 Federation, or other like-minded organizations, to also encourage education and littering enforcement in  
38 other states that have the potential to impact our natural resources here in Michigan.