

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

**Congress of the United States**  
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The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 26, 2017

Subject: President's Executive Order 13795

Dear Secretary Ross:

We are greatly concerned with the President's Executive Order 13795, which directs you to review national marine sanctuaries and monument designations or expansions made since April 28, 2007 and to assess locations for offshore oil and gas leasing. As you begin your evaluation, we write in strong support of California's four national marine sanctuaries under review: the Channel Islands, Monterey Bay, Cordell Bank, and the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. These are economic hubs that generate millions of dollars in economic activity and support thousands of jobs along our coastlines. We urge you to maintain the designation and current boundaries of California's marine sanctuaries under review intact. We also ask that the Administration keep in place the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program of 2017-2022, which prohibits offshore drilling off the California Coast.

California's marine sanctuaries are vital to its \$1.9 trillion coastal economy and essential in protecting some of our nation's most treasured natural resources. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that between 2010 and 2012, harvest from commercial fishing in four California national marine sanctuaries produced about \$69.2 million. This had a multiplier effect, which generated \$70 million in income that supported 1,840 coastal jobs. Meanwhile, many of our constituents know too well the disastrous impacts offshore oil drilling has on our shorelines and our local economies.

During the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, 100,000 barrels of crude oil spewed into the Santa Barbara Channel. This was the largest oil spill in California's history that significantly harmed Santa Barbara's unique marine ecosystem and wildlife. Paired with the 2015 Refugio oil spill, also in Santa Barbara County, where clean-up costs hit \$92 million—these incidents remind us that our coastal communities cannot afford another devastating oil spill.

Rescinding any marine sanctuary designation or decreasing any of the current boundaries to allow for offshore drilling would threaten marine resources that help sustain many commercial fisheries and local tourism, both of which are essential to California's economy. The Channel

Islands National Marine Sanctuary and National Park, off the coast of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, hosts one third of Southern California's kelp forests. While kelp is a main source of food for the California red sea urchin, data from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife finds that kelp forest have declined dramatically since 2014 due to warming waters; thus, endangering the red sea urchin, a multi-million-dollar fishery that is important to the sushi industry. Similarly, travel and tourism accounts for 1 out of 8 jobs in the Central Coast.

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, often referred to as the "Serengeti of the Sea," is internationally recognized for its truly unique wildlife views and thousands of people travel far and wide to see this one-of-a-kind treasure. NOAA reports that total travel spending revenue in 2003 for the five counties adjacent to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in the Central Coast was \$5.9 billion. In addition, the sanctuary also supports the Monterey Bay Aquarium—which in 2009 saw 2 million visitors and produced \$71 million in direct spending.

Just north of the Monterey National Marine Sanctuary, commercial fishing in the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary created almost \$1.7 million in economic output on a three-year average. In the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, on a three-year average, commercial fishing earned over \$15 million in harvest revenues.

California's marine sanctuaries and recent expansions were the product of years of public engagement with local communities and enjoy wide support in California. In our support for our marine sanctuaries, we recognize that healthy sustainable ecosystems and economic growth are not mutually exclusive.

We ask that you keep in mind the strong support that the California marine sanctuaries enjoy from its residents and the millions of visitors they host each year, as you review the four marine sanctuaries in California. Our coastline and natural resources are renown and we should be good stewards in protecting our natural resources for future generations.

Sincerely,



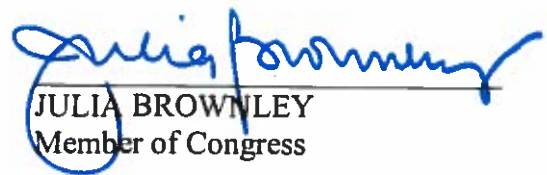
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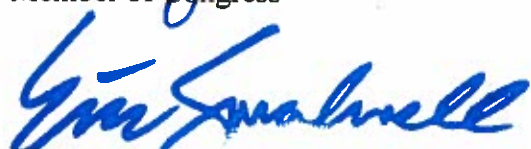
  
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