

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2024

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Richard W. Spinrad  
Administrator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W., Room 5128  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo and Administrator Spinrad:

We write to request an update on the progress of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and to express our support for the joint position of indigenous communities, Morro Bay Offshore Wind Leaseholders, and environmental organizations, specifically support for a phased approach to the designation of the Chumash Sanctuary that will set the initial northern boundary of the Sanctuary be located south of Diablo Canyon, and north of Port San Luis and Avila Beach. If designated, the marine sanctuary would be the first Tribally nominated sanctuary in the United States and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians would serve as co-steward as outlined in the August 2023 draft management plan.

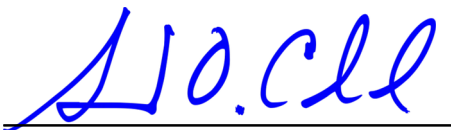
As you know, advocates and community members on the Central Coast of California have pursued this sanctuary designation for decades and celebrated the decision to move the nomination forward in 2021. To support the advancement of marine conservation, tribal interests, and clean energy, in April, indigenous communities, Morro Bay Offshore Wind Leaseholders, and environmental organizations announced a joint position in support of a phased approach to the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary). In a letter to Dr. Spinrad, the parties recommended that upon initial designation, the northern boundary of the Sanctuary be located south of Diablo Canyon, and north of Port San Luis and Avila Beach. This designation will allow for the co-existence of the marine sanctuary, as well as the responsible development of offshore wind. In addition, a coalition of 52 environmental organizations submitted a letter to Dr. Spinrad supporting this negotiated position. As strong supporters of the Administration's goal of protecting 30 percent of U.S. oceans by 2030, we urge the Department of Commerce and NOAA to finalize the designation of the Chumash Sanctuary using this phased approach to establish robust protections for cultural and ecological resources off the Central Coast, while providing certainty for responsible offshore wind development, operations and maintenance.

The December 2022 auction of five leases off the coast of California, the first ever floating offshore wind auction for the Pacific region, represented a major milestone in our nation's efforts to advance a clean energy future. These floating offshore wind projects are currently under development and will be crucial to reaching California's goal of bringing 25 GW of offshore wind online by 2045 and will be a significant contributor to the Administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy capacity by 2030, and 15 gigawatts of floating offshore wind capacity by 2035. Offshore wind will strengthen grid reliability, provide capacity to meet growing energy demands, and be essential in accelerating economy-wide carbon emissions reductions. It is critical that we ensure the success of these offshore leases and we are convinced that a phased approach to the designation of the Sanctuary that will set the initial northern boundary of the Sanctuary south of Diablo Canyon, and north of Port San Luis and Avila Beach, is the only path forward to ensure this.

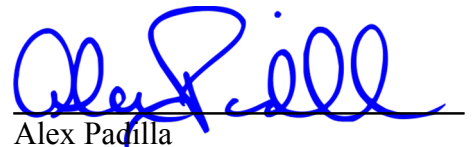
For these reasons we strongly urge you to finalize the designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary as quickly as possible and that it is finalized consistent with the negotiated agreement. We

firmly believe that this would be mutually beneficial in the protection of our marine resources off the Central Coast and ensuring the success of offshore wind. The long-standing relationship of coastal communities with these waters extends to the present with a sustainable commercial and recreational fishery and a vibrant tourism industry recognized nationally as a destination vacation. Lastly, recognizing these abundant waters are essential to the heritage of ocean-going bands among the First People of the Pacific Coast, we urge you to move forward with a final designation that acknowledges the need for marine protection and offshore wind energy without any further delays. Please keep our offices informed of the status of the designation and if there are any issues or delays that we should be aware of.

Sincerely,



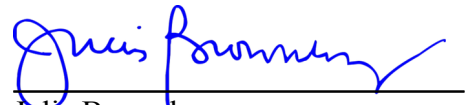
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress