

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

We write to convey our continued strong support for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and to ask that you prioritize the completion of the sanctuary designation process this year as previously scheduled. As you know, the people of the Central Coast of California have pursued this sanctuary designation for decades, and celebrated the decision to move the nomination forward in 2021. It has now been more than a year since the public scoping process concluded, and it is crucial that this momentum toward designation continue without delay, with the publication of the draft designation documents this spring and a final designation this year.

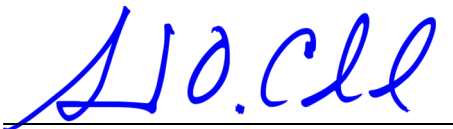
We are mindful of the many competing needs and decisions pending before your Department. In the case of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, you have an opportunity to address multiple administration priorities at once. The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will establish protections for a biologically diverse and ecologically productive region, including feeding grounds for numerous species of whales and dolphins, sea otter populations, kelp forests, and other endangered marine life, including abalone. Located between the Monterey Bay and Channel Islands marine sanctuaries, the proposed sanctuary is home to vital commercial and recreational fisheries. Designating this area as a marine sanctuary would ensure we continue to be good stewards of these natural resources, while maintaining sustainable access for commercial and recreational fishing.

These abundant waters are essential to the heritage of ocean-going First People of the Pacific Coast. As we wrote in 2021 and 2022, creating a unique, co-management relationship between the management of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, while bringing in the historical and cultural knowledge and practices of the broader indigenous community will strengthen the conservation of this one-of-a-kind place on the California coastline. Through the application of traditional ecological knowledge, we can better understand climate change and build resilience to protect the biodiversity, cultural values, and economy of the Central Coast of California.

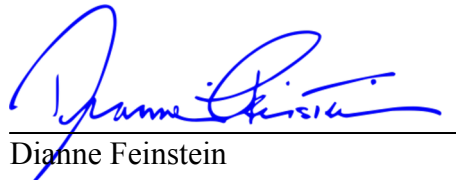
Finally, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary's designation will play an important role in the protection of marine resources off the Central Coast that contribute to California's \$1.7 trillion coastal economy. The long-standing relationship of coastal communities with these waters extends to the present with a sustainable commercial and recreational fishery and a vibrant tourism industry recognized nationally as a destination vacation – and where the ecological and economic devastation from oil spills is all too familiar.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to celebrating the designation with you of a unique sanctuary to protect the past, present and future of California's waters off the Central Coast. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices should you have any questions.

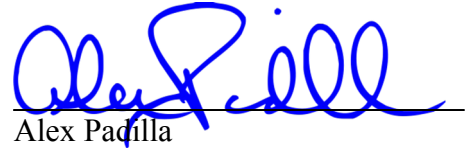
Sincerely,



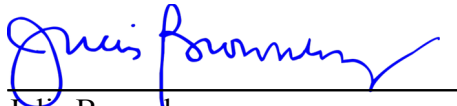
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



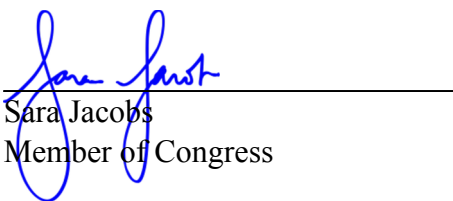
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



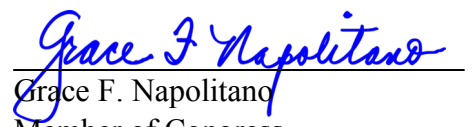
Katie Porter
Member of Congress




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