

[Date]

Dear Secretary Locke:

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) Advisory Council would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Department of Commerce (DOC) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to prioritize the reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA). With this letter we are not offering a blanket endorsement for any specific reauthorization bill that may be introduced. The process of developing a reauthorization bill should include appropriate and timely dialogue on the specific language in the bill to address concerns of the OCNMS members.

Pursuant to our charge as a Sanctuary Advisory Council (AC), we look forward to the opportunity to evaluate, discuss and comment on any proposed reauthorization language. In our capacity as AC members it is our intent over the next few AC meetings to schedule discussions regarding the function of a reauthorized act. We are providing this notice to you in hopes that DOC and NOAA will provide us with the opportunity for adequate review time on any proposed language as well as seek out our input on this important topic. While not all inclusive, some examples of potential discussion topics are: how the act interacts with other legislation and existing management strategies; the role of the Advisory Councils both nationally and locally; what language is needed that acknowledges the unique character of our sanctuary and the obligations of the OCNMS to the Coastal Treaty Tribes; mechanisms to define how ecosystem based management can be implemented through the act.

It has been five years since Congress last reauthorized the NMSA in 2000. This delay in reauthorizing the NMSA greatly concerns our Council, as this legislation defines our role and serves as the foundation for the work we do. Moreover, for the past two years we have been working intensely to revise OCNMS's management plan and know that, to implement this plan effectively, we will require the framework and associated funding of a strong, reauthorized NMSA.

As the OCNMS Advisory Council, we represent a diverse group of constituencies that have a strong interest in sanctuary and marine resource management in the Olympic Coast region. Our role is to advise the OCNMS Superintendent on sanctuary management topics and concerns. We volunteer our time to assist OCNMS in maintaining a transparent, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive management structure for the sanctuary.

We hope that you and Dr. Lubchenco will work together to ensure that an open transparent process of communication is the foundation for the reauthorization of the NMSA. A timely and thorough reauthorization process is needed to reflect the importance of the sanctuary programs.

Sincerely,

Lauren Theodore 9/7/10 4:15 PM

Comment: WORKING GROUP COMMENT:
This is a section of the letter that the working group would like to discuss with the entire AC. Should this level of detail be included here or should we just note that we will be having discussions and will provide another letter with more specific issue later? Working group members will share the discussion that they had about this issue and ask the AC to weigh in.