

All in Favor...

A sample of the public comments submitted to NOAA on designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce 1401
Constitution Avenue, NW
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 in support of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary designation as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seeks public comment for the initial designation scoping process. The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary represents decades of work by the people of the Central Coast of California culminating with the initial proposal in 2015 and the recent decision in 2021 to move the nomination forward.

Designating the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will advance President Biden's America the Beautiful campaign to conserve and restore at least 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030. Located between Monterey Bay and Channel Islands marine sanctuaries, the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will establish protections for a biologically diverse and ecologically productive region. This spectacular marine environment includes feeding grounds for numerous species of whales and dolphins, sea otter populations, kelp forests, and 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. The designation would also provide much-needed assistance in conserving California's kelp forests and rehabilitating other endangered marine life, including abalone.

Recognizing these abundant waters are essential to the heritage of ocean-going bands among the First People of the Pacific Coast, we support designating the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary in name. In doing so, we urge NOAA to implement policies consistent with the joint Secretarial order issued by the Secretaries of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture and embrace the goal of "managing Federal lands and waters in a manner that seeks to protect the treaty, religious, subsistence, and cultural interests of federally recognized Indian Tribes." Additionally, we recognize that NOAA is authorized under 15 CFR 22 to "[d]evelop and implement coordinated plans for the protection and management of these areas" with "any American Indian tribe, band, group, or community recognized as such by the Secretary of the Interior," and urge you to exercise this authority when considering designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. We request NOAA to adopt a co-management approach with the indigenous community who have always been a part of the marine ecosystem. Creating a unique relationship between the management of the sanctuary with NOAA and the historical and cultural knowledge and practices of the 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 and economy of the Central Coast of California.

We also request NOAA pay close attention to the role of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary's protection of marine resources off the Central Coast that contributes 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. We encourage NOAA to incorporate these assets as resources worthy of protection and promotion.

The waters within the proposed boundaries of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary are no different than other oceans and coastal communities facing the impacts of climate change. We need to protect these historical, cultural, ecological and economic resources even more today than we have in the past. Besides the threat of warming ocean waters and sea-level rise, designating this sanctuary will permanently protect this unique section of the coastline against oil drilling, where the ecological and economic devastation from oil spills is all too familiar.

Thank you for considering our comments and requests. We look forward to working with NOAA and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries on the opportunity to develop 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
U.S. Senator



Alex Padilla
U.S. Senator



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

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January 31, 2022

Mr. Paul Michel
West Coast Region Policy Coordinator
NOAA Sanctuaries West Coast Regional Office 99
Pacific Street, Building 100F
Monterey, CA 93940

Re: Docket ID NOAA-NOS-2021-0080- Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping and to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

Dear Mr. Michel:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments as part of the designation process for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) initiated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

As 75 of the nation's leading aquariums and zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, we applaud the decision to initiate the process to consider the designation of the CHNMS. Our place-based institutions bring the wonders of ocean and freshwater ecosystems to life for millions of people each year. We are stewards of the wildlife and habitats in our exhibits and work to improve environmental conservation in our communities, sometimes in partnership with our regional national marine sanctuaries. The national marine sanctuary designation process is a meaningful way to bring communities together to plan for the management and protection of ocean resources for the benefit of all, now and in the future. We are proud to support the launch of this worthwhile endeavor off the central coast of California.

We are particularly pleased that the CHNMS designation process will recognize and incorporate the heritage of the Chumash and other Indigenous Peoples along the Pacific Coast. We strongly support the integration of Indigenous values and traditional knowledge throughout the planning and implementation processes to ensure equitable, effective and community-led co-management and collaborative conservation moving forward.

We also hope this scoping effort will take into account the potential for advancing additional goals that will have far-reaching benefits for the United States. These include:

- Safeguarding the remarkable living marine resources and ecosystems off the Central California coast. The waters of the proposed CHNMS are a hotspot of both productivity and biodiversity, fueled by seasonal upwelling and shaped by unique oceanic conditions and geologic features. The rich biodiversity and nationally significant ecosystems of this region depend on critical habitats in need of protection, including nursery and feeding grounds for endangered, threatened and commercially important species. The area is frequented by migrating humpback whales, blue whales and leatherback sea turtles, and is home to nearly one-third of the southern sea otter population, the Morro Bay harbor porpoise, snowy plovers and other important seabirds, marine mammals, invertebrates and fishes.

- Building resilience against the impacts of climate change. Increasing protections is an essential step to ensure our ocean is more resilient to climate change impacts. The proposed sanctuary area is known for kelp forests, seagrass beds and wetlands, which are powerful contributors to climate resilience, help buffer vulnerable coastal communities and are worth careful preservation. If designated, the CHNMS would create a connected corridor of ocean and coastal management and protection in California, joining the three national marine sanctuaries to the north and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to the south. This contiguous protection would enhance the ability of managers to respond to climate change threats and conserve valuable resources.
- Enhancing scientific research and science-based education. The network of sanctuaries helps facilitate the exploration of important regional research questions, including data and science that can be applied to policy solutions and management. As informal education institutions, we also understand the power of educating learners of all ages and backgrounds about the importance of the natural world and fostering these connections. Sanctuaries, with their spectacular natural environments, are ideal partners to drive ocean and science literacy.
- Powering local economies. National marine sanctuaries support coastal communities and drive local economies by providing jobs and opportunities for people to discover, recreate, and form lifelong connections with these spectacular places. Tourism, recreation, sustainably managed fisheries and the indirect benefits of these economically valuable sectors help drive nearby blue economies.

The National Marine Sanctuary System serves as an example of our nation's commitment to improving the health of our ocean for the benefit of current and future generations. The proposed CHNMS would be a remarkable addition, and we encourage you to consider the ways it may create new opportunities and ensure the preservation of important biological, historical, and cultural resources.

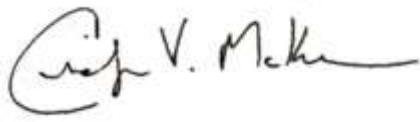
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this exciting and important endeavor. Sincerely,



Julie Packard
Executive Director
Monterey Bay Aquarium



Dr. Peter Kareiva
CEO and President
Aquarium of the Pacific



Crislyn McKerron
Executive Director Cabrillo
Marine Aquarium



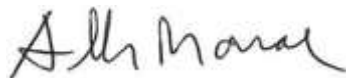
Scott Sampson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
California Academy of Sciences



Aragon Burlingham Executive
Director CuriOdyssey



Jon Forrest Dohlin Chief
Executive Officer Fresno
Chaffee Zoo



Allen Monroe President/CEO
The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens



Denise M. Verret
Chief Executive Officer & Zoo Director Los
Angeles Zoo & Botanical Gardens



Jason Jacobs
Executive Director
Sacramento Zoo



Paul A. Baribault
President and CEO
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance



Tanya Peterson
CEO & Executive President
San Francisco Zoological Society & Gardens



Richard Block
President & CEO Santa
Barbara Zoo



Jim Campbell-Spickler
Zoo Director
Sequoia Park Zoo



Stephanie Stowell
Director
ABQ BioPark



Doug Piekarz President
& CEO Akron Zoo



Gary Siddall President
and CEO Aquarium of
Niagara



Craig Ivanyi
Executive Director
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum



Marianne Vella Zoo
Director
Bergen County Zoo



Chris Pfefferkorn
President & CEO
Birmingham Zoo



Tracey Tomme
President and CEO
Boonshoft Museum of Discovery



Patrick Tennyson
President and CEO
Butterfly Pavilion



Dr. Michael Adkesson
President and CEO
Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo



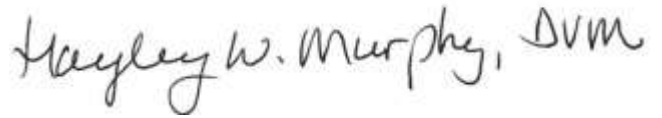
Thane Maynard Zoo
Director
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden



Christopher Kuhar Executive
Director Cleveland
Metroparks Zoo



Tom Schmid
President and CEO
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium



Hayley Murphy
Executive Director and CEO
Detroit Zoological Society



Michael D. Crocker
Zoo Director
Dickerson Park Zoo



Roger Germann
President/CEO
The Florida Aquarium



Rick Schuiteman
Executive Director
Fort Wayne Children's Zoo



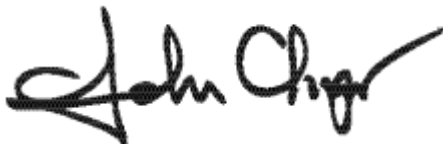
Eric J. Rose
Senior Vice President, Zoological Advancement Herschend
Family Entertainment
On behalf of Adventure Aquarium, Newport
Aquarium & Vancouver Aquarium



Anthony J Vecchio Executive
Director/CEO Jacksonville
Zoo & Gardens



Cynthia Claus Director
Jenkinson's Aquarium



John Chapo President
Emeritus
Lincoln Children's Zoo



Megan R. Ross, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Lincoln Park Zoo



Jason M. Patlis President
and CEO
The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk



Kirby Fowler President
& CEO
Maryland Zoo in Baltimore



Stephen M. Coan
President and CEO
Mystic Aquarium



Jack Mulvena President
& CEO
Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens



John Racanelli President
& CEO National
Aquarium



Vikki N. Spruill
President & CEO
New England Aquarium



Greg Charbeneau
President
OdySea Aquarium



Dwight Lawson
Executive Director and CEO
Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Gardens



Dennis E. Pate President
and CEO
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium



Carrie Lewis
CEO
Oregon Coast Aquarium



Margo McKnight
President / CEO
Palm Beach Zoo & Conservation Society



Jeremy Goodman
President & CEO
Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium



Alan Varsik Director
Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium
Northwest Trek Wildlife Park



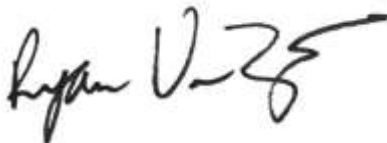
Beth Heidorn Executive
Director Racine Zoo



Sally Jacobson
Executive Director Red
River Zoo



Anthony Mason
Executive Director
Riverside Discovery Center



Ryan VanZant
Executive Director
Rolling Hills Zoo



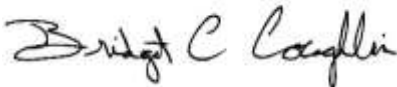
Jeff Bullock
Zoo Director
Roosevelt Park Zoo



Ken Frye
Zoo Director
Scovill Zoo



Robert Davidson
CEO
Seattle Aquarium



Bridget C. Coughlin, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Shedd Aquarium



Kevin Mills President
and CEO
South Carolina Aquarium

Phillip Ginter Executive
Director
Southern Tier Zoological Society/Ross Park Zoo

Tim Brown
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Tracy Aviary

Alan Tousignant
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Trevor Zoo at Millbrook School

Lindsay Hutchison
President & CEO
Tulsa Zoo

Eric Goode
CEO
Turtle Conservancy

Cynthia W. Spanoulis
Director
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

Greg Bockheim
Executive Director
Virginia Zoo

John F. Calvelli
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs Wildlife
Conservation Society
On behalf of WCS's New York Aquarium, Bronx Zoo,
Central Park Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo & Queens Zoo

Alejandro Grajal
President & CEO
Woodland Park Zoo

Jeff Ewelt Executive
Director
ZooMontana

John Linehan President
and CEO Zoo New
England

Joseph A. Couceiro President
& CEO ZooTampa at Lowry
Park

January 31, 2022

Re: NOAA-NOS-2021-0080

Dear Mr. Paul E. Michel,

Please accept this letter of support for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) on behalf of the Central Coast business community.

As business owners and residents of the Central Coast, we deeply value the coastline and offshore waters for all that they contribute to our area. The unsurpassed natural beauty of the Central Coast and its abundant and diverse marine life is what sets our region apart, contributing to our quality of life and that of our families and employees. It is also what draws visitors from around the globe to our area. Tourism is the number one industry in our counties, generating over \$3.5 billion annually prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting over 35,000 jobs.

We believe that designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will be both good for the environment and good for business. The proposed sanctuary would protect 140 miles of Central California cultural and marine resources and will generate an estimated \$23 million in revenue and at least 600 new jobs. The designation would also provide enhanced opportunities for promotion and marketing and send a signal to the world that our region is special and worth visiting, with associated benefits to local restaurants, hotels, stores, campsites, and other businesses.

While California's ocean and coastal economy has historically been strong and is recovering quickly from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the recent oil spill in Huntington Beach demonstrated the continued risk our coastline and coastal dependent businesses face from offshore oil and gas development and transportation. Our coastal resources also face serious long-term threats from climate change. Designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary can help reduce these threats by prohibiting new offshore oil and gas development and promoting climate change research.

We urge you to designate the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and adopt a management plan and programs to address the impacts of climate change, keep the proposed sanctuary boundary as outlined in the Notice of Intent, promote marine research and education, and partner with the business community to improve conservation of the Central Coast.

We also ask that you keep the name "Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary" in memory of the work of Tribal Chair Fred Collins, the original nominator, and to honor the other Leaders and Members of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council who have campaigned for over 40 years.

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to contribute our thoughts on this important process.

Sincerely,

All Good (Morro Bay), Best Western Tradewinds (Morro Bay), Bill Gaines Audio Inc. (SLO), Blue Marble Investments (SLO), Bundle + Bash (SLO County), Central Coast Outdoors (Morro Bay), Dr. Cain's Comics (SLO), Elyse Events (SLO County), Gatherings Thrift (Atascadero), Gino's Pizza (SLO), La Isla Fashion Group, LLC. (SLO & Portland), LogicMonitor (Santa Barbara), Lovely Day Adventure Co. (SLO), New Frontiers Market (Solvang), Patagonia (Ventura), San Luis Solar (SLO), Sandcastle Celebrations (Central Coast), SB Adventure Co. (Santa Barbara), Shell Beach Surf Shop (Shell Beach), Sloco Health + Wellness (SLO), Solarponics (Atascadero), Solstice Green Directory (SLO), Ten Over Studio (SLO), The Photo Shop (SLO), Tiger Lily Salon (SLO), Whalebird Kombucha (SLO), and Willow Tree Wildlife (Cayucos)



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