

**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. 2023

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

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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.

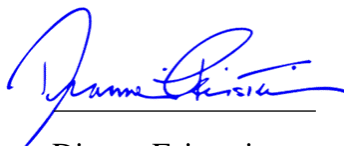
The waters within the proposed boundaries of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary are no different than other oceans and coastal communities facing the impacts of climate change. We need to protect these historical, cultural, ecological and economic resources even more today than we have in 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