



United States Senate

February 7, 2022

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

The Honorable Richard W. Spinrad
Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmos-
pheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W. Room 5128
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo and Administrator Spinrad,

I write in strong support of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, and urge you to finalize its designation status. I am pleased the proposal has reached this point in the process, and I welcome the opportunity to stress its benefits to California and our National Marine Sanctuary System. Final designation would protect various marine resources essential to California's \$1.7 trillion coastal economy. It also directly aligns with the Administration's initiatives to address nature loss, climate change, equity, and enhanced engagement with underserved and tribal communities as well as to protect 30% of our oceans by 2030.

California's coast is one of the most biologically diverse and ecologically productive regions in the world. This 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. These waters are essential to the heritage of Indigenous communities, and the Chumash people's historical knowledge is key to conservation moving forward. Designation would also protect 40 known historic shipwrecks in the region, including the Navy's worst peacetime losses, the S.S. Yankee Blade and the S.S. Montebello. A Sanctuary designation will preserve these natural treasures of special historic, cultural, and archaeological significance.

Our oceans and communities are facing unprecedented challenges from a changing marine environment and impacts of climate change. The time to act is now. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's own studies show California's coastal waters warming at a faster rate than the global average, and severe threats to marine ecosystems due to ocean acidification and habitat loss. Furthermore, designation as a national marine sanctuary would enshrine protections against oil drilling for a region with first-hand experience of devastation from oil spills off the Santa Barbara coast in 1969 and again in 2015.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, or have your staff contact Alexis Segal at alexis_segal@feinstein.senate.gov in my office. Thank you very much for considering my request, and I look forward to working with you on this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>