

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross,

We are concerned that a recently issued Federal Register Notice regarding your review of National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments designated or expanded since April 28, 2007<sup>1</sup> provides very little opportunity for public engagement. As members of Congress representing states, territories, and districts that may be affected by the findings of this retrospective review, we want to ensure that our constituents are given a reasonable opportunity to provide comment.

According to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, national marine sanctuaries generate \$8 billion and support over 70,000 jobs in coastal communities from activities like commercial fishing, research, recreation and tourism. Protecting and preserving these treasured resources drives the local economies in many of these communities, and residents should have sufficient time to provide input and voice concerns about possible changes resulting from this review.

As called for by Executive Order 13795<sup>2</sup>, the review requests public comments on a broad scope of topics related to the expansions or designations of eleven National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments across the country over the last ten years. It takes time and thought to respond effectively to this request to review a number of federal actions spanning a decade and impacting hundreds of millions of acres.

While we recognize that the terms of the Executive Order require that the Department report to the White House by October 25, 2017, meaningful public participation will require a comment period longer than thirty days. Furthermore, the Order specifically requests comment on the adequacy of Federal, State, and tribal consultations conducted prior to the eleven designations or expansions.<sup>3</sup> Extending the comment period would give these same entities a better opportunity to provide critical input as part of this review. Public input and community engagement are hallmarks of the National Marine Sanctuaries

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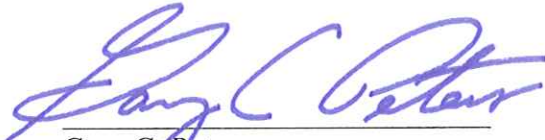
<sup>1</sup> 82 FR 28827, available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/06/26/2017-13308/review-of-national-marine-sanctuaries-and-marine-national-monuments-designated-or-expanded-since>.

<sup>2</sup> 82 FR 20815, available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/05/03/2017-09087/implementing-an-america-first-offshore-energy-strategy>.

<sup>3</sup> See Executive Order 13795, section 4(b)(i)(B).

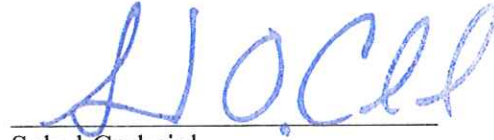
program, and such a short public comment period is inconsistent with the processes that created and expanded the affected sanctuaries. We strongly urge you to extend the public comment period to at least ninety days.

Sincerely,



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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



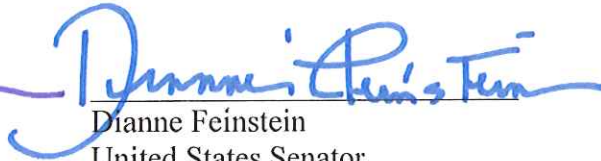
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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



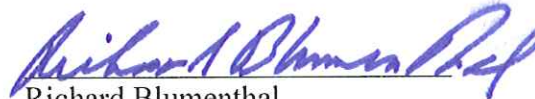
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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



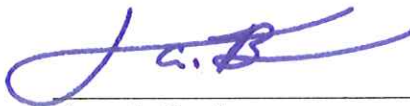
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Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



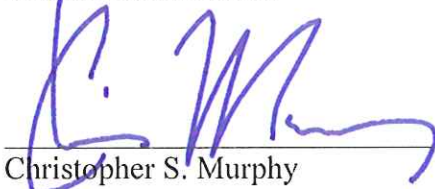
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



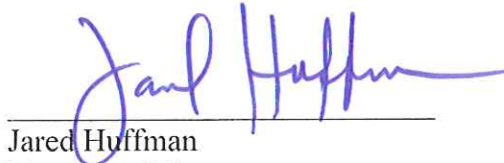
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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



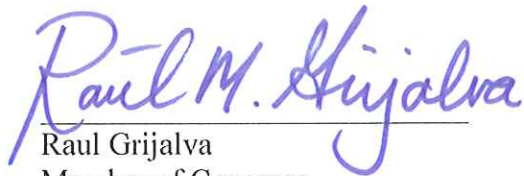
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Nydia M Velázquez  
Member of Congress

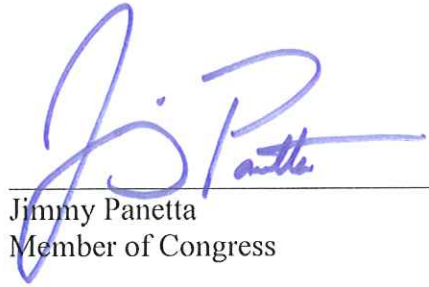


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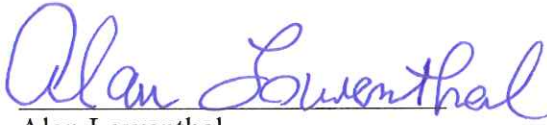
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Raul Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



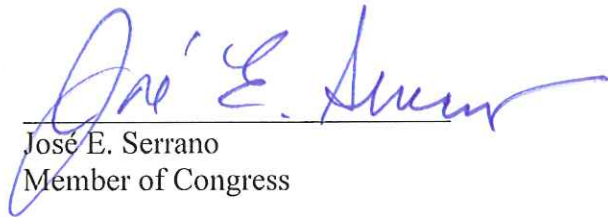
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



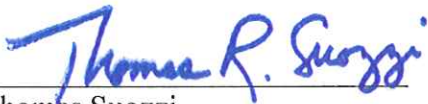
Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo  
Member of Congress



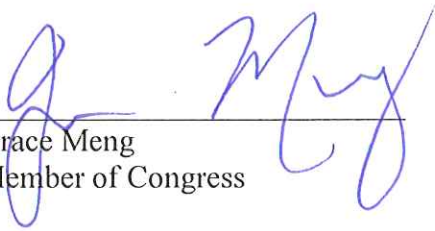
Jose E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Thomas Suozzi  
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

cc:

EO 13795 Review

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Silver Spring Metro Campus Building 4 (SSMC4), Eleventh Floor

1305 East West Highway

Silver Spring 20910