



For Immediate Release  
June 7, 2005

Contact:  
David Roscow  
703-276-2772 x21

**Michigan Congressman Vernon Ehlers Honored  
For Leadership to Protect, Promote Nation's Oceans**

**National Marine Sanctuary Foundation  
2005 Annual Leadership Award**

**Washington, DC** - In recognition of his leadership and longstanding commitment to protecting the nation's ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources, Michigan Congressman Vernon Ehlers (R-03) is being honored with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NSMF) 2005 Leadership Award during a June 7 ceremony at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC. The Award comes on the eve of World Oceans Day, June 8.

"I am honored to be recognized as a leader in the effort to protect and restore the Great Lakes, which are so fundamental to the economic and environmental interests of Michigan, our nation and our world," said Congressman Ehlers. "As a state that borders four of the five Great Lakes, Michigan understands the important role we must serve as stewards of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve, which is a cultural and natural treasure."

Congressman Ehlers was presented the Award by National Geographic Explorer-In-Residence, former NOAA chief scientist, and internationally recognized ocean advocate Dr. Sylvia Earle. "As a fellow scientist, I appreciate the keen sense of inquiry that is required to pursue the field of science—whether you're a marine biologist like myself—or a physicist like the Congressman," said Earle. "Throughout his distinguished career in academia, scientific research and public service, Congressman Ehlers has imbued not only

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that keen sense of inquiry, but also the discipline and dedication to purpose required of any good scientist.”

Congressman Ehlers has been a leader in the fight to protect the Great Lakes. In 2003 he introduced the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act, designed to protect the Great Lakes from the billions of dollars in damage caused every year by zebra mussels, lamprey eels and round goby. Just last year, he led the charge for the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which brought much needed funding to clean up toxic waste in the Great Lakes.

“We are honored and delighted to pay tribute to Congressman Ehlers for all his support and leadership through the years,” said NMSF Executive Director Lori Arguelles. “On issues ranging from disaster preparedness to preserving the marine environment, he has been a true leader and visionary in the effort to educate citizens about vital issues related to the Great Lakes and our oceans.”

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the 2005 Capitol Hill Oceans week, a three-day symposium that features ocean policy experts from government, private industry, nonprofits and academia. Participants look to raise awareness of important ocean and coastal issues among our nation’s leaders and to build bridges among various ocean constituencies. The forum seeks to continue the momentum to reform national ocean policy through the Bush Administration’s U.S. Ocean Action plan, as well as ocean and coastal legislation pending in Congress.

Congressman Ehlers is being honored along with Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI) and Maryland Congressman Wayne Gilchrest (R-01), as well as former U.S. Senator and Governor of Connecticut Lowell Weicker (R) who will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary Program. It was created to inspire all people to preserve, protect and promote our nationwide network of marine sanctuaries. The 14 sites within the national marine sanctuary system protect oceans and great lakes from the Florida Keys to the Hawaiian Islands and from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico.

