

# Join the National Marine Sanctuary Caucus



February 9, 2009

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to invite you to join the National Marine Sanctuary Caucus, a bipartisan coalition of Members dedicated to increasing awareness and strengthening commitment to our nation's National Marine Sanctuaries.

The National Marine Sanctuary System serves as the trustee for 13 sanctuaries and one Marine National Monument. National Marine Sanctuaries contain deep ocean gardens, near-shore coral reefs, whale migration corridors, deep-sea canyons, and underwater archeological sites. They range in size from Fagatele Bay's one-quarter square mile in American Samoa, to over 5,300 square miles in Monterey Bay, California – one of the largest marine protected areas in the world. Together, these Sanctuaries and the Monument protect nearly 150,000 square miles of coastal and open ocean waters, including countless species of wildlife and their habitat, while allowing compatible commercial and recreational activities.

National Marine Sanctuaries also promote scientific research and exploration, and they foster our important maritime cultural legacy through community outreach, public-private partnerships and educational programs. And, as economic engines for many coastal communities, National Marine Sanctuaries support our travel and tourism industry and they ensure long-term sustainable use of our ocean resources.

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress there will be several issues of vital interest that will affect National Marine Sanctuaries and the Marine National Monument, including the reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The Caucus will work to educate Members and their staff about this key conservation law and other important issues facing Sanctuaries. The Caucus will also try to make sure that adequate resources are directed to the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries so these unique underwater treasures can be preserved for future generations.

If you would like more information on the National Marine Sanctuary Caucus, or to become a member, please contact Jonathan Levenshush (Rep. Capps) at 5-3601 or Sarah Gamino (Rep. Ros-Lehtinen) at 5-3931.

Sincerely,

**LOIS CAPPS**  
Member of Congress

**ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**  
Member of Congress