



February 24, 2009

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Acting Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
14<sup>th</sup> and Constitution Avenue, NW  
Room 5810  
Washington, DC 20230

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Dear Ms. Glackin:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, I am writing to encourage you to use some of the 2009 economic stimulus funds to support the important mandates of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), one of the few nationally authorized programs within NOAA. The mission of ONMS is to protect, conserve, and enhance the National Marine Sanctuary System, which currently includes 13 sanctuaries and one marine national monument (co-managed). These areas embody natural and cultural submerged resources in the ocean and Great Lakes that are deemed of national significance and worthy of permanent protection.

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The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries exemplifies the pillars of NOAA's mission—science, service, and stewardship. It has matured significantly since its inception with recent elevation to office level within NOAA, additions to the system, a larger and more experienced staff, and the creation of a regionalized component to its management regime. There is no doubt that ONMS is a top candidate to receive funds from the \$230 million allocated by Congress for "NOAA operations, research, and facilities to address a backlog of research, restoration, navigation, conservation and management activities." In addition, the infrastructure that supports the work of ONMS is just as critical as its operations, and it should also be considered a high priority in NOAA's spending of the \$600 million "for construction and repair of NOAA facilities, ships, and equipment." These timely investments in national marine sanctuaries would allow for some necessary improvements in their management, operations, and facilities, thereby enhancing their effectiveness in the face of increasing challenges, including climate change. The return on the

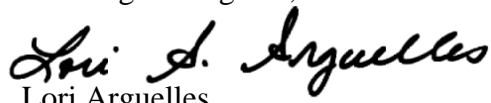
investment is several-fold, as they are place-based tools that are useful in addressing some fundamental problems of the Nation. Particularly, in the case of the economy, sanctuaries foster tourism, support healthy fishery stocks, provide ocean-related jobs, and more. Funds used for such projects as building new vessels, visitor centers, and other infrastructure for sanctuary sites not only support marine conservation, but they also create jobs for construction workers, engineers, designers, and relevant partners. This funding could put an injection in the local economies where, for instance, these boat yards are located, where these potential workers live, and where these new tools would be put to use.

Even some of the \$170 million directed for NOAA to “address critical gaps in climate modeling and establish climate data records for continuing research into the cause, effects and ways to mitigate climate change” could be well spent in sanctuaries. Sanctuaries help reduce the impacts of climate change on local ecosystems by acting as sentinel sites that help reduce other stressors on those areas, making them more resilient. In addition, the research and monitoring taking place in the sanctuaries provide valuable information about the changes happening in our ocean, which helps determine how to counteract and adapt to such changes.

We understand that these are tough economic times, and thus the need for such a stimulus package as this. We also recognize that NOAA as a whole has been underfunded for quite some time now. Therefore, we think an appropriate investment of limited funds would be the most effective means of getting a worthy return. There are many reasons, some of which we have laid out here, as to why NOAA would be best served by making such investments in the work done by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

Thank you for your sincere consideration of this request. I look forward to working together as we continue to champion NOAA’s efforts.

With highest regards,



Lori Arguelles  
President & CEO

cc:

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
Congresswoman Lois Capps, National Marine Sanctuary Caucus Co-Chair  
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, National Marine Sanctuary Caucus Co-Chair  
Congressman Sam Farr, House Oceans Caucus Co-Chair  
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