

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESPONSE SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD:
Mr. Robert Talbot
Chair, Board of Trustees of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**

November 20, 2007

At the field hearing on the National Marine Sanctuaries Act held by the House Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Oceans of the Committee on Natural Resources on November 3, 2007 in Santa Barbara, CA, Chairwoman Bordallo asked me what an appropriate funding level would be for NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program. To that I responded \$100 million. For consideration by the Subcommittee, I would like to provide for the record a detailed rationale for that response.

As highlighted in the written testimony that I originally submitted, the National Marine Sanctuary Program manages 14 sites around the country that collectively protect approximately 150,000 square miles of area. This is about the same size as the *entire* U.S. National Park System and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge System combined. However, the NMS Program is currently funded (FY07 enacted) at less than 2% of the combined budgets of these other two systems, which are about \$2 billion and \$1 billion respectively. The increase to \$100 million only brings that fraction to just over 3%, but would allow for incredible improvements in the operations and management of the National Marine Sanctuary System.

I admit that it is difficult to make a direct dollar per area comparison of these varied systems given their different structures and requirements. However, it does highlight what the NMS Program is lacking, some of which was addressed in the testimony of witnesses at last week's hearing. For instance, the ability to carry out enforcement within the National Marine Sanctuary System is greatly impaired by the lack of sufficient funds for staff time, vessels, and other enforcement needs. There also seems to be unanimous agreement that there needs to be increased research and monitoring in sanctuary waters, which would improve both understanding and management of these areas and their resources. Again, this takes adequate manpower and equipment.

Though the National Marine Sanctuary Program was initially comprised of a few small sites with limited focus, it has had many successes and gained public recognition over the past few decades. This has led to the expansion of the sanctuary system to include more diverse habitats and resources, as well as competing human uses, which has greatly amplified the need for site characterization, science, and a deliberate and transparent public process to best manage these areas. Unfortunately, as the NMS Program has matured, its budget has not as is necessary to align with the program's increasing mandates and range of functions performed at site, regional, and national levels.

Even before the additional responsibilities that came along with the recent designation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, the NMS Program was in need of new and renovated facilities, more vessels and

aircraft, more staff support, and other necessary components. Further, as the NMSA reauthorization process moves forward, many of us hope to see a repeal of the moratorium for designating new sanctuaries, which would lead to even further expansion of the NMS System. Though the NMS Program has been efficient in using resources available to it and in creating partnerships for further support, it is time that Congress authorizes funding levels that are much more adequate for the scope and value of this program.

The level of \$100 million would be an appropriate incremental increase from the NMS Program's current funding, which would account for inflation plus reasonable growth over the years—including recovering from the cuts it has experienced over the past few fiscal cycles. Such funding would allow the NMS Program to more effectively fulfill its many important mandates to better protect our imperiled oceans. I encourage you to contact NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program for more detailed information on the hard costs associated with the various aspects of its mission.

Finally, I'd like to clarify that the \$36 million that I stated in my written testimony as the current operating budget for NMS Program is the base funding only. It does not include an additional \$10 million appropriated as earmarks, much of which was allocated specifically for management and research in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Therefore, the funding for the previously existing system of 13 sanctuaries was level-funded from FY06 to FY07, and stands to remain that way if the President's FY08 request level is upheld, which would be an unfortunate outcome.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to be involved in this process to reauthorize a strong National Marine Sanctuaries Act. I hope that it will not remain overdue for too much longer.

Attachments: NMSP Budget Fact Sheet; State of the Sanctuary Report 2006-2007