

SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

January 14, 2013

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Dr. Rebecca M. Blank
Acting Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20230

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Daniel J. Basta
Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3278

Re: Reactivation of the National Marine Sanctuaries Site Evaluation List

Dear Acting Secretary Blank, Dr. Lubchenco, and Director Basta:

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council believes our country needs more National Marine Sanctuaries to protect our ocean and Great Lakes treasures. We are writing to support the reactivation of the NOAA Site Evaluation List (SEL), which is a vital part of the process to create new national marine sanctuaries. The SEL is an important process by which local communities can start conversations about the feasibility and opportunities of a national marine sanctuary off their coast.

That the conversation begins within the community is essential. Since 2000, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary has engaged with our community in Alpena, Michigan, to protect the Great Lakes and their rich history, while also enhancing the local and regional economy and bringing new cultural and educational assets to the area. Strong communities are the fabric of a strong nation,

The opinions and findings of this letter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Sanctuary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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and the Thunder Bay NMS Advisory Council looks forward to working with other areas around the nation, particularly around the Great Lakes, to explore the potential for new sanctuaries.

We believe that each community must be engaged in the conversation about whether a national marine sanctuary is right for their area. Without the reactivation of the SEL, local communities are limited in their ability to engage in this process.

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council stands ready to assist NOAA and interested communities to not only make the sanctuary system larger, but stronger as we work to protect our oceans and Great Lakes. Please let us know how we can be of any assistance in this important mission.

Sincerely,



Olin Joynton
Chair, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council