



June 15, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to express our concerns regarding President Trump's executive order directing your Department to review "potential energy and mineral exploration and production" and all designations and expansions of National Marine Sanctuaries in the past ten years. The scope of this review includes four marine sanctuaries in California: Greater Farallones, Cordell Bank, Monterey Bay, and Channel Islands. We strongly urge that these marine sanctuaries maintain their current boundaries and designations.

California has more marine sanctuaries than any other state and firsthand experience with disastrous offshore oil spills, including the 1969 Santa Barbara spill near the Channel Islands. In response, communities up and down California's 1,100-mile coastline have voted to limit offshore oil/gas drilling. California's marine sanctuaries are equally vital to our outdoor recreation economy and commercial fishing industry. According to NOAA, more than 1 out of every 8 days Californians spend fishing takes place in our 4 National Marine Sanctuaries. These marine sanctuaries also support an estimated 1,840 jobs in the commercial fishing industry.

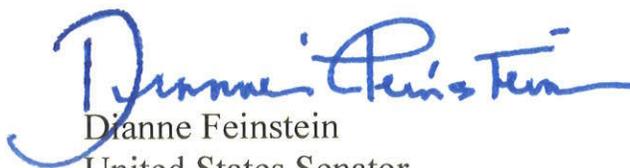
Any action to downsize or disband these critical protected areas would jeopardize marine resources that sustain profitable commercial fisheries, globally important kelp forests, at-risk marine mammal species, and other iconic ocean life treasured by Californians and visitors from around the world. NOAA satellite data shows that California's marine sanctuaries—the Channel Islands in particular—provide pockets of cold, nutrient-rich water surrounded by warmer Pacific. These cold-water areas support one of the most ecologically productive marine environments in the world and provide refuge for migrating species. Protected marine areas are more important than ever, given rising ocean temperatures caused by greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants in the world's oceans.

President Trump's executive order also requires your Department to consider "any impacts on production in the adjacent region." We ask that you clarify this broad statement. In particular, we are concerned that your Department's review may recommend that California's marine sanctuaries merely in *proximity* to offshore drilling sites or related maritime traffic be downsized or revoked.

Californians cherish their Pacific coastline and ocean resources. In short, these marine sanctuaries are part of our state's natural heritage and integral to vibrant coastal communities. These marine sanctuary designations are supported by scientific determinations that call for these areas to remain protected, as well as generations of Californians who fought to protect them. These areas are simply irreplaceable.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, or have your staff contact our staff, with questions about California's marine sanctuaries. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

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