



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

991 Marine Dr., The Presidio
San Francisco, CA 94129

January 11, 2007

Daniel J. Basta, Director, NMSP
1305 East-West Hwy
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Basta:

As members of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, we have each been participants in the preparation and release for public review of the Joint Management Plan by NOAA's Sanctuaries Program in Washington. As you know, during the first series of extensive public "scoping" hearings that began the Joint Management Plan proceedings in 2001, and throughout this process, there have been hundreds of comments submitted by the public in support of boundary expansion of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Comments have particularly supported federal legislation introduced for that purpose in the US House of Representatives by Rep. Lynn Woolsey, representing Marin and Sonoma Counties, and in the US Senate by California's Senator Barbara Boxer. A congressional field hearing was held on these bills by Rep. Woolsey in Sonoma County. The Boards of Supervisors of Sonoma, Marin and San Francisco Counties have each formally endorsed this legislation, as have the California Coastal Commission, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, the Ocean Conservancy, and the Sierra Club, among others.

We now discover that during the closing days of the recent 109th congressional session, both Rep. Woolsey and Senator Boxer had reached an agreement with the Senate's legislative managers of the new Magnuson Fisheries Act Reauthorization bill, to attach to it their own legislation expanding the boundaries of the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries northward to the Gualala River as part of the Magnuson Act. This agreed-to amendment addressed the critical issue of boundary expansion as a specific and singular legislative element, leaving the details of management issues inside of the newly expanded boundaries to be subsequently addressed in the future by the Sanctuary Program and its constituents. We further understand that, at the very last minute, this expansion proposal was rejected by NOAA Headquarters in Washington D.C.

Clearly, the Sanctuary Advisory Councils of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary were not consulted in any way about this arbitrary rejection of boundary expansion by NOAA. As a result, this intervention by NOAA has circumvented what may have been a once-in-a-lifetime legislative opportunity to secure permanent protection for the key upwelling zone that feeds nutrients to all three Central California National Marine Sanctuaries and a unique legislative window was lost, perhaps forever. Given that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and other sanctuaries in the

current Program were created by Congress using similar legislative means, it seems counterproductive to let NOAA now jeopardize the unique and productive marine ecosystem on the Sonoma Coast and in adjoining waters. Our Sanctuary Advisory Council hereby requests an explanation and rationale for this inexplicable action undertaken by NOAA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barbara Emley".

Barbara Emley
GFNMS Advisory Council Chair