

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0506

March 13, 2026

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
H-310 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
2468 Rayburn House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Meng:

The National Marine Sanctuary System is our network of over 629,000 square miles of protected waters held in trust for all Americans. National marine sanctuaries conserve nationally significant natural, historic, and cultural resources and promote access to exploration and world-class outdoor recreation. National marine sanctuaries are sources for solutions. By balancing conserving natural and cultural treasures with public access and economic development, sanctuaries underpin thriving tourism industries while also benefiting community well-being by maintaining healthy marine ecosystems.

Sanctuaries and marine protected areas are vital to maintaining healthy ocean and Great Lakes ecosystems and fishing grounds that bolster our productive coastal economies. They protect biodiversity and provide habitat for countless species of fish and wildlife and safeguard coastal communities from flooding and storms by increasing resilience.

Sanctuaries also protect shipwrecks, sacred heritage sites, and other maritime heritage and cultural resources that tell the stories of America's history. As the U.S. approaches its 250th anniversary, the National Marine Sanctuary System offers a unique opportunity to celebrate history and heroes while protecting underwater treasures. Many of the greatest relics representing America's past as a seafaring nation lie at the bottom of the sea and lakes in our national marine sanctuaries.

National marine sanctuaries promote visitation, bolster tourism and robust recreational industries, and drive the growth of the blue economy by balancing protection with compatible use. Their national recognition elevates coastal communities as destinations, fostering investment in attractions, hospitality, and local businesses. Sanctuaries generate billions annually in local economies and support numerous jobs and businesses in the fishing, tourism, recreation, and scientific research sectors. They are living laboratories that allow for cooperative science and research efforts that improve resource management and advance innovative public-private partnerships.

Engaging communities as stewards of these waters makes sanctuaries unique and provides a comprehensive, highly participatory approach to managing and conserving marine ecosystems and the Great Lakes for current and future generations. Public participation is a hallmark of sanctuaries and underscores their dedication to civic engagement and leadership. From nomination to day-to-day, communities are at the core of national marine sanctuaries. Recent sanctuary designations, nominations, and expansions are the result of passionate citizens and widespread community interest in conserving our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries operates a fleet of ships equipped for mapping, monitoring, buoy maintenance, and rapid emergency response, enhancing public safety and resource protection. Maintaining investment in recapitalizing aging vessels in addition to upgrades, retrofits, and life-cycle extensions is mission critical. Increasing demands on an aging fleet lead to higher operating costs and challenges to maintaining safe, efficient, and effective operations. Increased PAC funding would support the replacement or repair of vessels, drive shipbuilding construction, and allow for better monitoring, research, emergency response, and enforcement efforts.

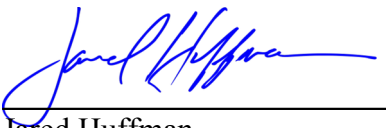
As you craft the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to support the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries at no less than \$95.5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027. We respectfully request that you:

- Provide at least \$87.0 million for Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) account; and,
- Provide at least \$8.5 million for Marine Sanctuaries Construction, within NOAA's Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) account.
- Direct NOAA to prioritize conservation, education, mapping, and research efforts across the agency in the National Marine Sanctuary System.
- Cap NOAA and the National Ocean Service corporate fees to no more than 5 percent of the annual appropriations.

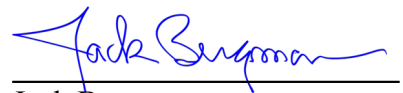
National marine sanctuaries connect people and communities through recreation, science, education, U.S. history, and stewardship and inspire community-based solutions that help individuals understand and protect the spectacular underwater habitats, wildlife, archaeological resources, and cultural seascapes of the United States. This is an opportunity to invest in America's waters and the communities and businesses that depend upon them. Robust funding will ensure sound management of these treasured places through community stewardship; support of mission critical tools, like small boats; active restoration of marine environments; preservation of maritime resources; and improved understanding of marine and Great Lakes ecosystems.

We strongly encourage you to invest in America's community-based national marine sanctuaries by supporting the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries at no less than \$95.5 million in Fiscal Year 2027. Your support for marine sanctuaries will send a powerful message about the benefits of a healthy ocean and Great Lakes and underscore the continuing ecological, economic, and historical value of America's underwater national treasures. We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



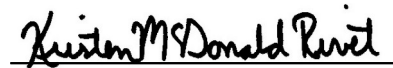
Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



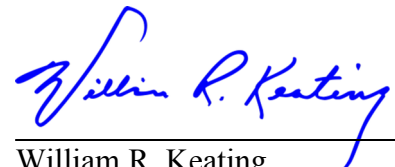
Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



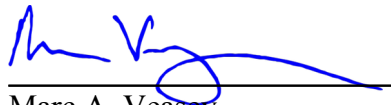
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



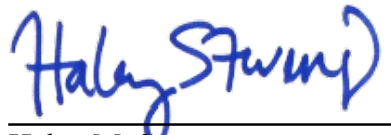
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



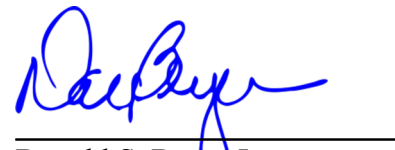
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



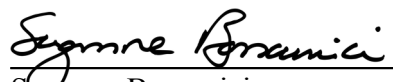
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



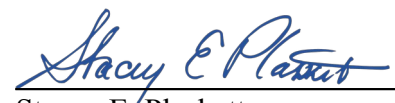
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



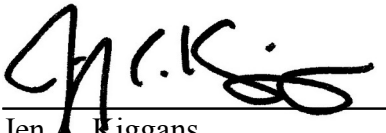
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



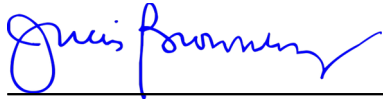
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Jen A. Riggans
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



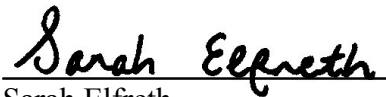
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



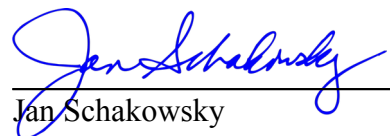
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



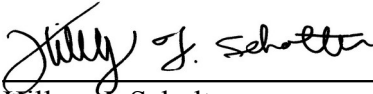
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



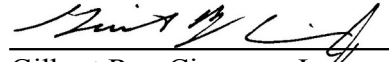
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Hillary J. Scholten
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Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
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Nicole Malliotakis
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Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
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Bill Foster
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Frederica S. Wilson
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Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



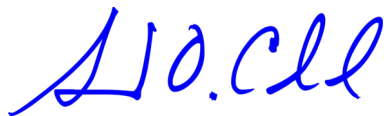
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
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Ted W. Lieu
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Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
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Brian K. Fitzpatrick
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Kim Schrier, M.D.
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Judy Chu
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Doris Matsui
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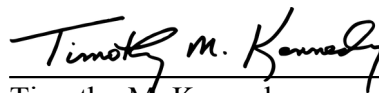
Jahana Hayes
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Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



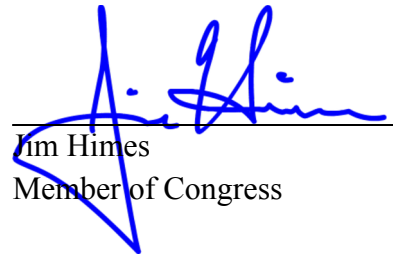
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



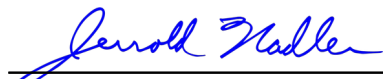
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



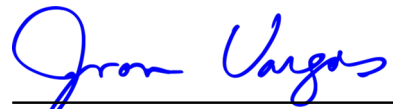
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



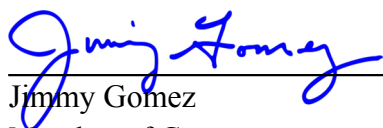
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



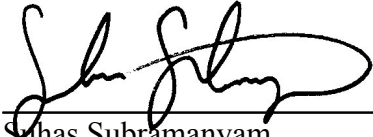
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



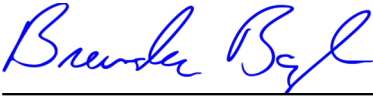
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



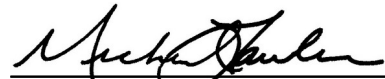
David Scott
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



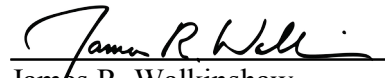
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager Dove
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



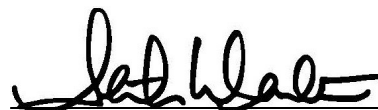
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



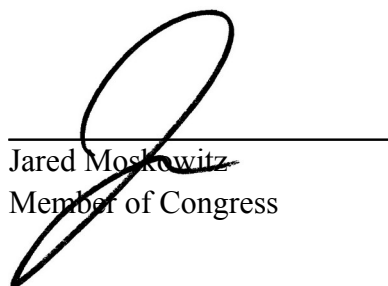
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



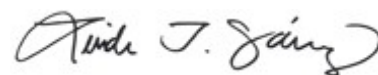
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



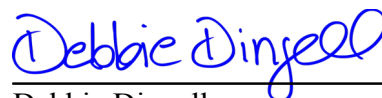
Andre Carson
Member of Congress



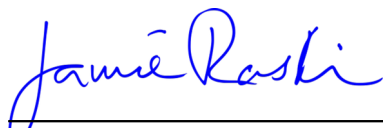
Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



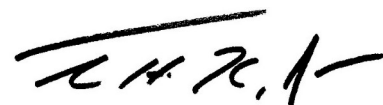
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



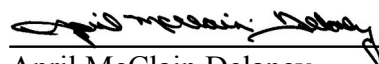
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



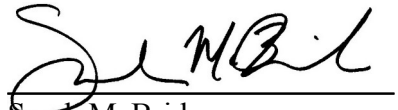
Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



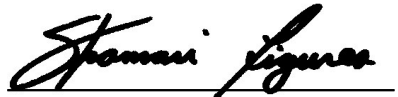
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



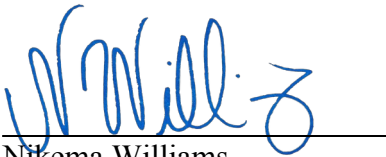
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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