Dear Chairman Hansen:

I'm writing on behalf of the California Association of Harbormasters and Port Captains, a 60-year-old professional organization of mostly coastal ports and harbors. I'm writing to comment on the National Marine Sanctuary Program's effort to create additional marine protected areas within the Monterey Sanctuary.

Our Association members have long valued the National Marine Sanctuary Program for its educational and cooperative programs, such as its Water Quality Protection Program. Certainly our members and our boater-customers want a healthy ocean. We have, however, concerns about how the Sanctuary Program, not limited to the Monterey Sanctuary, makes its decisions for resource management issues.

In the Sanctuary's Decision Letter dated February 15, 2008, from Monterey Superintendent Paul Michel, three rationales are put forward to create additional marine protected areas in the federal waters of the Monterey Sanctuary.

Our Association hopes that the Pacific Fishery Management Council will require a very strong science-based rationale for any action undertaken by the Sanctuary Program that affects human usage of Sanctuary waters. We can't help but note that both the research and the wilderness area rationales don't require any science to justify the creation of new MPAs for those purposes. Rather, it could be the opinions of Senior Sanctuary Program Management as to what areas they feel have intrinsic or research value. This would not be a very satisfying outcome of a public process, and I'm sure I don't need to remind the PFMC that the economic and food production contributions of fishing to this nation are within your care and responsibility.

We believe that the Sanctuary Program must have very strong science-based reasons to remove any waters from sustainable fishing activities. We hope that you will hold the MBNMS to that standard.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Jack Peveler, President
California Association of Harbormasters and Port Captains

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