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CALIFORNIA

Agenda Item I.1.d
Supplemental Public Comment 2
June 2008

United States Senate

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May 29, 2008

Jim Martin, West Coast Regional Director
Recreational Fishing Alliance
P.O. Box 2420
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for writing to me regarding H.R. 1187, the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries Boundary Modification and Protection Act, which passed the House in March. I appreciate having this opportunity to respond to your concerns.

I am proud to have introduced S.2635, the Senate version of this bill, which was approved by the Senate Commerce Committee earlier this month. Like H.R. 1187, S.2635 would permanently protect the coastal waters and estuaries of Sonoma County and portions of Mendocino County by extending the boundaries of the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries.

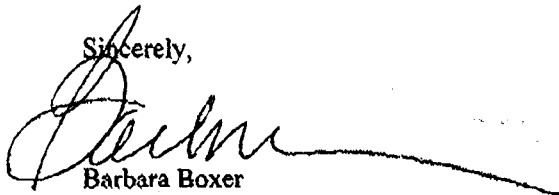
I understand that you have concerns that H.R. 1187/S.2635 could result in more fishing regulations within the Farallones and Cordell Bank sanctuaries. Let me assure you that recreational fishing is extremely important to California and to me. In fact, one of the objectives of this bill is to protect the water quality and habitat essential for good fishing.

The Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank Sanctuaries do not restrict fishing – in fact, their designation documents do not allow them to impose fishing regulations – and this bill would not change that. The Sanctuary Advisory Councils, which draft sanctuary regulations, include representatives from the commercial and recreational fishing industries (the Vice-Chair of the Farallones Council is a fisherwoman), and any proposal to change the designation documents would require both the support of these fishermen and a lengthy public review process.

I appreciate your perspectives on improvements needed in the National Marine Sanctuaries Program and will take your suggestions into consideration during reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. However, because of imminent threats to California's marine environment (including oil spills, sewage pollution, and water removals), I believe that Congress must act swiftly to enact H.R. 1187/S.2635. Be assured that the aim of this bill is not to impose further fishing restrictions but to protect an ecologically and economically important area from pollution and habitat degradation.

Again, thank you for writing to me. Please feel free to contact me again about this or other issues of concern to you and the Recreational Fishing Alliance.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

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