



Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee

November 21, 2011

Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and
NOAA Administrator
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 5810
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

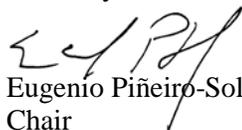
The Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) is aware of the significant budget pressures now facing NOAA and the Department of the Interior in Fiscal Year 2012 and beyond. We recognize that the agencies have difficult choices to make in light of these fiscal constraints. In light of these pressures, we urge the agencies to recognize the value of the products and services provided by the National Marine Protected Areas Center and protect the investment by NOAA and its partners in improved ocean management through the capabilities developed by the MPA Center over the past decade.

As a diverse group of stakeholders representing ocean industry, natural and social scientists, conservationists and other ocean users, we share a strong commitment to providing the best available science, information and tools to inform decisions about MPAs, as well as other ocean uses. The MPA Center has demonstrated an ability to fulfill this function in through a small, efficient and dedicated staff. They have developed innovative approaches and products that have transformed the way we understand and manage valued places in nation's coasts and oceans.

We also recognize the value of the MPA Center's role in serving as bridge among MPA programs across federal, state and tribal agencies so that agencies can share information and form partnerships to address issues of common concern. Additionally, the Center's carefully cultivated role as a neutral, honest broker of complex, contentious and consequential ideas about place-based management is unique.

The MPA FAC understands that the National Ocean Service, home to the MPA Center, is currently undertaking an evaluation to assess how programs can be organized in the most efficient and effective manner. In the course of this assessment, and in other budget and planning decisions undertaken by NOAA, we urge you to recognize the return on investment represented by this small but effective group, and thus to maintain the key functions of the MPA Center for the benefit of our diverse stakeholder groups and the ocean resources we all value.

Sincerely,



Eugenio Piñeiro-Soler
Chair

cc. Holly Bamford, Acting Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service
Paul Doremus, Ex Officio Member, Department of Commerce
Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior
Lauren Wenzel, Acting Director, National Marine Protected Areas Center, NOAA

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