

December 9, 2020

Dear President-elect Biden,

The undersigned organizations submit this letter urging you to restore vital protections to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument – the first marine national monument in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean.

On September 15, 2016, President Barack Obama designated the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument by presidential proclamation for the purpose of protecting the unique ecological resources within the boundaries of the monument that have long been the subject of intense scientific interest and where much remains to be discovered. President Obama's action provided necessary safeguards to these critical and vulnerable ocean ecosystems and ecological resources against adverse human activities including specifically commercial fishing. The designation followed a public outreach process that included more than a year of stakeholder outreach and was supported by hundreds of thousands of citizens, as well as hundreds of federal, state, and local elected officials, scientists, businesses, faith leaders, aquariums, fishermen and fishing groups, whale watch operators, dive groups, and conservation organizations.

The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, located about 130 miles off the coast of New England, comprises three underwater canyons deeper than the Grand Canyon, four seamounts that are higher than any mountain east of the Rockies, and the marine ecosystems in which they are located. These remarkable ocean features provide a refuge for an array of marine life from endangered whales to Atlantic puffins to centuries-old deep-sea corals. Scientific research from this area will also materially benefit the nation's understanding of and responses to the impacts of climate change on our oceans and the ocean resources on which so much of our economy depends. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument honors America's proud tradition of preserving the country's natural heritage and biological bounty using the Antiquities Act, a tradition dating back to Theodore Roosevelt and embraced by 15 presidents of both parties. To protect and preserve the objects of scientific interest within the boundaries of the monument, the Obama Proclamation specifically prohibited all commercial fishing activities in the monument, save for lobster and red crab fishing which were given a transition period until 2023 to phase out operations. We note that landings and revenues in the potentially affected fisheries have not decreased since monument designation, indicating that fishermen are able to catch up to their limits elsewhere.

On June 5, 2020, President Trump issued a proclamation that reversed monument protections by allowing commercial fishing in this unique, protected ocean area. We ask that you immediately restore the protections contained in the Obama Proclamation, thus safeguarding this ocean monument for the purposes for which it was created and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Animal Welfare Institute
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Audubon Connecticut*
Audubon New York
Audubon Society of Rhode Island*
Azul
Blue Frontier
Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation*
Center for American Progress
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Coastal Studies*
Citizens Campaign for the Environment*
Clean Water Action
Climate Reality Project, Southern Connecticut Chapter*
Connecticut Audubon Society*
Connecticut Ornithological Association*
Connecticut Votes for Animals*
Conservation Council for Hawaii
Conservation Law Foundation*
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters*
EarthEcho International
Earthjustice
Endangered Habitats League
Environment Protection Information Center
Environment America
Environment Connecticut*
Environment Council of Rhode Island*
Environment Maine*

Environment Massachusetts*

Environmental League of Massachusetts*

Friends of Animals*

Friends of the Earth

Green Party of Rhode Island*

GreenLatinos

Greenpeace USA

Gundalow Company*

Heal the Bay

Hispanic Access Foundation

Humane Society Legislative Fund

Inland Ocean Coalition

Inland Ocean Coalition, Alaska Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Arizona Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Central Texas Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Colorado Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, CSU Fort Collins Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Great Lakes Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Montana Student Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, North Texas Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, University of Michigan Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Utah Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Buffalo Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, CU Boulder Chapter

Inland Ocean Coalition, Wyoming Chapter

International Fund for Animal Welfare

International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute

League of Conservation Voters

Maine Audubon*

Maine Conservation Voters*

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association*

Marine Conservation Institute

Mass Audubon*

Menunkatuck Audubon Society*

Mill River Wetland Committee*

Mystic Aquarium*

National Audubon Society

National Ocean Protection Coalition

National Wildlife Federation

Natural Resources Defense Council

New England Aquarium*

New Hampshire Audubon*

North American Marine Environment Protection Association*

Northern Hall School*

NY4WHALES

Ocean Conservancy

Ocean Conservation Research

Ocean Defenders Alliance

Ocean River Institute*

Oceana

Pacific Environment

ProsperityForRI.com*

Rivers Alliance of Connecticut*

Roger Williams Park Zoo*

Save The Bay*

Save the Sound*

Sea Education Association*
Seacoast Science Center*
Setauket Harbor Task Force
Shark Stewards
Shedd Aquarium
Sierra Club
Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative*
Sunrise Movement Boston*
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Youth CT*
TAO: Tethra Advisors and Officers
TBD Economics, LLC
The Humane Society of the United States
The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk*
The Ocean Project*
The Wilderness Society
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Waitt Foundation
Waitt Institute
Western Nebraska Resources Council
Whale and Dolphin Conservation*
Women Working for Oceans*
World Surf League PURE

**New England-based organization*