

Aliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
P O Box 1309, Carmel Valley, CA 93924 (831) 659-2838

October 6, 2003

The Honorable Sam Farr, US House of Representatives, 1221 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo, US House of Representatives, 205 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lois Capps, US House of Representatives, 1707 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Honda, US House of Representatives, 1713 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Farr, Eshoo, Capps, and Honda,

As you are aware, the National Marine Sanctuary Act (NMSA) will be up for reauthorization beginning in 2004. Based on our experience in working with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary primarily, but also to a lesser degree, with California's other three national marine sanctuaries, changes to certain provisions of the Act should be considered. Most important to our organization will be the clarification of the role of the Sanctuary Program to enact regulations which may affect fishing operations. As a broad area of governance, we believe that the existing provisions of the National Marine Sanctuary Act that allow for the Program to create regulations that affect fishing, even despite objections from the NOAA Fisheries and its Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and state agencies, essentially pits the idea of the extreme protection of resources against the nation's need for food and the local economies which are dependent upon that. We believe that this nation needs to embrace the idea of sustainability and that in particular, with California's national marine sanctuaries comprising over 7000 square miles of territory off of our coast, we cannot use sanctuaries as places free of human intrusion; rather we must work for sustainable use. We also believe that it will benefit the Program and the nation for the National Marine Sanctuary Act to lay out even more clearly what types of work it will do to sustain fisheries.

This issue has been extraordinarily divisive for the Sanctuary Program, and in our opinion, has undermined the trust and credibility of the Program in the community.

We also believe that each sanctuary should be able to listen to and be advised by an independent advisory body (sanctuary advisory council) that would be empowered to set its own agendas, pick its own representatives, and write to whomever it wants, providing advice to and about the program to all interested parties. We therefore would also work for changes in the National Marine Sanctuary Act that will more clearly allow for these abilities by its advisory councils, even if it means that the councils are not directly funded by the Federal government.

We hope that you will allow us to work with you and your staffs along with the various Chairs of the appropriate House and Senate Committees and their staffs to see that these concerns of ours are addressed in language changes to the National Marine Sanctuary Act. We firmly believe that the goals of the Sanctuary Program and the community's support for the Program will be greatly enhanced if these clarifications occur.

Sincerely, Mike Ricketts, Co-Chair, ACSF, Kathy Fosmark, Co-Chair, ACSF

Supporting Associations & Organizations

Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association
Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association
Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Association
Monterey Commercial Fishermen's Association
Fishermen's Association of Moss Landing
Santa Cruz Commercial Fishermen's Association
Half Moon Bay Fishermen's Marketing Association
Fishermen's Alliance
Western Fish Boat Owners Association
Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association
Federation of Independent Seafood Harvesters
Golden Gate Fishermen's Association
Port San Luis Harbor District
City of Morro Bay Harbor, City of Monterey Harbor
Moss Landing Harbor District, Santa Cruz Port District
Pillar Pt. Harbor, San Mateo County Harbor District