

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 2, 2015

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Subcommittee of Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

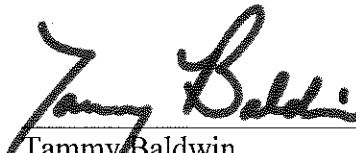
I write to express my support of funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Sanctuaries Program. Authorized under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act of 1972, the National Marine Sanctuary System is a prime example of how we can foster community and economic growth while also preserving our cultural traditions, protecting our historic resources, and ensuring public access to our most spectacular natural places. Through a highly participatory approach designed to accommodate multiple uses of our marine resources, sanctuaries support local jobs and businesses, generate local revenue, preserve community heritage and culture, and provide the public with new opportunities for recreation, tourism, and learning.

The National Marine Sanctuary System currently encompasses a network of 14 marine protected areas. The existing sanctuaries have strong ties to their local communities, businesses, and organizations, and have been able to leverage private funds and contributions to help the federal investment stretch further. Over the last several years, communities along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline have developed their own plan for a sanctuary. For the first time in two decades a sanctuary nominating process has opened, enabling communities like those in Wisconsin to nominate new marine sanctuaries.

Given the remarkable economic returns associated with marine sanctuaries, I urge you to provide strong funding in Fiscal Year 2016 for the Marine Sanctuaries program to allow this system to continue to serve communities across the country and to support the growth of this important system.

I appreciate your consideration of funding for National Marine Sanctuaries in FY 2016.

Sincerely,


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator