

# MONTEREY COUNTY



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August 14, 2017

The Honorable Wilber Ross  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

**Re: NOAA-NOS-2017-0066, Review of National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National  
Monuments Designated or Expanded Since April 28, 2007, under Executive Order 13795**

Dear Secretary Ross:

On behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our strong support for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). We are especially supportive of the 2008 expansion of MBNMS that included protections for the Davidson Seamount, which we understand is the focus of Executive Order 13795. We are strongly opposed to any policies that would allow oil and gas or mineral exploration or production in the vicinity of MBNMS.

Monterey County is a world class tourist destination due in large part to our coastal region and pristine ocean environment. The travel and tourism industry generates \$2.7 billion annually for Monterey County, and supports over 24,000 full-time jobs, making it one of the economic engines of the County. We support the comments of the Monterey County Hospitality Association that describe the importance of MBNMS to its member businesses and the connection between a healthy ocean and strong economy.

The decision to expand MBNMS in 2008 was made after an exhaustive environmental review and public engagement process was undertaken by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under the authority of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The management plan for MBNMS was developed with extensive public input from 20 public scoping meetings, over 12,000 written comments, 20 Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings, and 68 meetings of volunteer working groups, offering input and recommendations regarding which issues the MBNMS must address and how to address them. Monterey County supported this process in 2008, and we support it today as NOAA solicits public input for revisions to the 2008 management plan.

We believe it is highly inappropriate for the Federal Government to attempt to undermine the community driven process that led to the expansion of MBNMS. Any attempt to roll back protections in order to allow oil and gas or mineral development activities in MBNMS would be viewed by Monterey County as a serious threat to our local economy. We strongly urge you to maintain all current MBNMS protections.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Adams  
Chair, Board of Supervisors