



Jan. 26, 2022

Re: Proposed Designation of Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary

The Oceano Advisory Council (OAC) is a community engagement and feedback organization for the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors. We are supporters of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS). Oceano is a coastal town in Southern San Luis Obispo County and gateway to the Nipomo-Guadalupe coastal dunes complex, the largest and most environmentally diverse on Earth. Ancestral Chumash have occupied this area for more than 20,000 years and the OAC has a positive working relationship with the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (see attached letter).

The Pacific Ocean coast of Central California is one of the most environmentally unique, culturally significant, and biologically diverse in the world. Significant features include Chumash sacred sites, feeding grounds for 13 species of whales and dolphins, major upwelling processes, sea otter population, thriving kelp forests, world class fish diversity, pinniped spawning areas – the list goes on and on. Yet, these invaluable resources are highly vulnerable to human impacts, including potential offshore drilling and other harmful activities.

Since 2015, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council along with many local, regional and national partners have pushed NOAA to move forward with the designation. The proposal is supported by numerous community groups, businesses, and elected officials including Rep. Salud Carbajal (CA-24), Sen. Dianne Feinstein (CA), and Senator Alex Padilla (CA).

The Oceano Advisory Council fully supports the naming, designation, and creation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary.

Sincerely and on behalf of the OAC,

Allene Villa, Chair