



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

March 26, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Ross,

I am writing to express my support for the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and to urge you to maintain its existing boundaries as you review National Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Monuments designated or expanded since April 28, 2007 in accordance with Executive Order 13795. In 2014, this sanctuary underwent a boundary expansion which was initiated by the local communities and was strongly supported by stakeholders throughout the State of Michigan. Since the expansion, the sanctuary has positively benefited tourism, education and business growth, and has become a source of community pride and identity.

The sanctuary's protection of the world-class collection of shipwrecks found in northern Lake Huron and its celebration of the rich maritime heritage they represent continue to positively impact the economy of the surrounding communities. This is evident in expanding tourism in the Alpena area and the burgeoning cruise ship industry throughout the Great Lakes. As an avid diver, I have personally explored the cultural treasures preserved by the sanctuary and can testify firsthand to the benefit these artifacts represent not only for Michigan, but for the entirety of the Great Lakes region and North America as a whole.

When the boundary expansion was still being considered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and stakeholders, my office worked with NOAA officials to address concerns that the new boundaries would impact maritime transport. NOAA was able to make accommodations relative to these concerns and as a result, my Administration supported the expansion.

I would also like to highlight the fact that your review's focus on the potential for oil and mineral production is not relevant to Thunder Bay. Michigan state law has banned oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes since 2002, and Congress enacted legislation in 2005 that permanently prohibits the issuance of any federal or state permits for new oil and gas drilling in or under the Great Lakes.

For these reasons, I urge you to support and maintain the existing boundaries of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Snyder".

Rick Snyder
Governor