



**California Office**

1303 J Street, Suite 270 | Sacramento, CA 95814 | tel 916.313.5800 | fax 916.313.5812  
[www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)

December 4, 2015

**Via electronic mail**

NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
Attn: Mr. William Douros  
99 Pacific Street, Suite 100  
Monterey, CA 93940  
[William.douros@noaa.gov](mailto:William.douros@noaa.gov)

**Re: Support for Consideration of a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary**

Dear Mr. Douros:

On behalf of Defenders of Wildlife (Defenders) and our more than 1,000,000 members and supporters in the U.S., 200,000 of which reside in California, we are writing to convey our support for consideration of a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary proposed off the Central Coast of California. This proposed marine sanctuary contains significant cultural, environmental, and ecological assets deserving of protection.

Defenders is dedicated to protecting all wild animals and plants in their natural communities. To this end, we employ science, public education and participation, media, legislative advocacy, litigation, and proactive on-the-ground solutions in order to impede the accelerating rate of extinction of species, associated loss of biological diversity, and habitat alteration and destruction. Defenders works in the Central Coast of California to protect threatened and endangered species, particularly the southern sea otter, California condor, and Channel Island fox.

The proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary is situated between two previously designated marine sanctuaries – the Channel Islands and Monterey sanctuaries. This proposed sanctuary contains important resources that deserve protection. Of particular interest to Defenders and its members are the rich biological resources found within this area, including the Santa Lucia bank, three major upwelling areas, and a 3,000 meter deep submarine canyon. Sea otters, whales, dolphins, sea birds and other marine wildlife will benefit greatly from the protection of this important area.

We believe this proposed sanctuary site meets the standards of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and, for that reason, we strongly support the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. Thank you for your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 313-5800 or [kdelfino@defenders.org](mailto:kdelfino@defenders.org).

Sincerely,

Kim Delfino  
California Program Director

**National Headquarters**

1130 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036-4604  
tel 202.682.9400 | fax 202.682.1331