

GRAY'S REEF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Savannah, GA 31411

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To: John Armor, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA

The Sanctuary Advisory Council of NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) reviewed the U.S. Department of the Interior's report *Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful* that calls for the U.S. to conserve at least 30 percent of the U.S. land and waters by 2030. This letter outlines the summary of the Council's deliberations at its November 8, 2021 meeting.

Overall, the Sanctuary Advisory Council is supportive of the initiative. The initiative supports the GRNMS' goal of increasing connectivity of the Sanctuary, from integrating human dimensions with conservation and management goals to broadening participation in research and education.

The Sanctuary Advisory Council thinks that the implementation of the 30X30 initiative must include a series of facilitated discussions with representatives from multiple state and federal agencies, as well as local and tribal governments. Care should be taken to ensure that participants are from different backgrounds including age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, geography, and socioeconomic status, among other indicators of diversity. Doing so will not only ensure that diverse perspectives are included in the implementation, but it will also create ownership at the local level. Further, broad engagement with the public will ensure that any plan is inclusive of a variety of effective spatial management measures, including those not fully or highly protective.

What gets measured, gets managed. For the initiative to be effective, the implementation plan must also include specific performance metrics to measure success against the 30X30 goals.

Well-intentioned conservation initiatives can fall through the cracks with changes in political and congressional leadership. For the 30X30 initiative to be successful, the SAC suggests that the implementation plan also include ways to promote bipartisan support so that the initiative withstands any changes in the White House or the Congress.



The GRNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council stands ready to assist with the implementation and facilitation of the 30X30 plan. Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspectives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael D. Denmark

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Chair, Sanctuary Advisory Council
Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Special Note:

The advisory council is an advisory body to the sanctuary superintendent. The opinions and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.