



October 9, 2012

**Gray's Reef NMS
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

Dr. Daniel Gleason, Chair
Living Resources Research

Dr. Clark Alexander, Vice Chair
Non-Living Resources Research

Venetia R. Butler, Secretary
K-12 Education

William Cliett, Jr.
Citizen at Large

Mary Conley
Conservation

Michael Denmark
Sportfishing

Rick DeVactor
NOAA Fisheries Service
SE Regional Office

Lt Brandon Fisher
U.S. Coast Guard

Patrick Geer
Georgia DNR
Coastal Resources Division

Dr. Anna George
Conservation

Dr. Timothy Goodale
University Education

Dr. Charles Hopkinson
NOAA Sea Grant

Warren Hupman
Charter/Commercial Fishing

Capt. Doug Lewis
Georgia DNR Law Enforcement

Randy Rudd
Sport Diving

Al Samuels
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement

Suzanne VanParreren
Sapelo Island NERR

The Honorable Rebecca M. Blank
Acting Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.
Undersecretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
NOAA Administrator
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: National Marine Sanctuaries Site Evaluation List Reactivation

Dear Acting Secretary Blank and Dr. Lubchenco,

The NOAA Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is writing to request that the Site Evaluation List, which permits evaluation of unique marine areas for possible sanctuary designation, be reactivated. We request that the Site Evaluation List be reactivated so that communities with an interest in sanctuary designation have the opportunity to determine the best method for protecting vital living marine and maritime heritage resources.

Many communities around the country have expressed a desire to explore national marine sanctuary designation for the conservation of resources with potential significance to their region and the Nation, such as the North Atlantic right whale and deepwater coral reefs. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act provides thorough and comprehensive benefits as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) seeks to fulfill its mandate to protect nationally significant and ecologically important marine areas. This tool is particularly critical as states and communities plan activities and development for marine and coastal areas. Activation of the Site Evaluation List is a critical link in the process communities can use to evaluate the significance of resources along with their economic and conservation values, and to provide public comment and input on suggested sanctuary sites to enhance these values. Without an active Site Evaluation List, however, those communities are not able to consider all options.

Page 2

The Honorable Rebecca M. Blank

Dr. Jane Lubchenco

October 9, 2012

The Gray's Reef Sanctuary Advisory Council is a community-based group representing diverse interests including science, fishing, diving, conservation, education, and other state and federal resource management agencies. The council serves as a liaison to the community regarding Sanctuary issues and assures continued public input to management decision-making. The findings expressed in this request represent the unanimous opinion of this diverse body and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary or the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

We look forward to your timely response on our request to reactivate the Site Evaluation List.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel F. Gleason", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Daniel F. Gleason, Ph.D.

Chair, Gray's Reef Sanctuary Advisory Council

cc: Dr. George Sedberry, Superintendent, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
Daniel J. Basta, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS)
Billy Causey, Director, ONMS Southeast Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Region