

"Protect the
Ocean and You
Protect Yourself."



October 30, 2015

Mr. John Armor, Acting Director
NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Director Armor,

I write to you to express my wholehearted support for designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would be for our coastal ocean, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, California and the United States.

In 2006, my initiative to protect the Northwest Hawaiian Islands took me to The White House, where I screened my PBS documentary, *Voyage to Kure*, for President George W. Bush. Inspired, the President declared the 1,200-mile chain of islands a Marine National Monument, the largest marine protected area in the world at that time. The Marine National Monument that President Bush created in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands became part of the US National Marine Sanctuary System.

While nearly 13 percent of land on Earth is protected, only 3 percent of our oceans are designated for protection. Each of the thirteen National Marine Sanctuaries were created at different periods of time and have different specific regulations, but all acknowledge the growing needs of serving our communities, educating our societies about sustainable fisheries, and preserving our relationship with the blue planet that we depend upon for survival.

There is no other sanctuary in the National Marine Sanctuary System that is also primarily dedicated to protecting the coastal cultural heritage of the First Peoples. In this, the sanctuary proposed for the Central Coast of California would be unique.

In addition, as case with all Pacific Coast sanctuaries, designation of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would protect our coast from offshore drilling and potential oil spills. I wish we'd had such a sanctuary in the Santa Barbara Channel before 1969. I saw what happened when Platform A released 3,000,000 gallons of oil into the ocean and contaminated 35 miles of California's coastline. Five years ago, my team were some of the first divers to document from underwater the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Last May, the images of the Santa Barbara oil spill that have haunted me since 1969 again unfolded before my eyes when 105,000 gallons of offshore oil, after being pumped ashore, spilled from a pipe on the Gaviota coast, much of it washing back into the ocean. The long-term impacts will not be known for years. In the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, you have the opportunity to preserve the SLO coast from this fate.

Ocean Futures Society
513 De La Vina St.
Santa Barbara,
California 93101 USA

With additional office in :
France and Brazil

TEL 805.899.8899
FAX 805.899.8898

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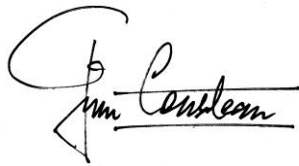


My belief in the importance of public outreach on ocean issues is the reason why I directed the design and development of the Parc Oceanique Cousteau in Paris, a public attraction to teach visitors about the ocean without displaying captive animals. It is why I led the transformation of 100,000 square feet of the *Queen Mary* into the Living Sea Museum in Long Beach. And it is why I founded the Ocean Futures Society, continuing the legacy of my father and my family, exploring our global ocean, inspiring and educating people throughout the world to act responsibly for its protection, documenting the critical connection between humanity and nature, and celebrating the ocean's vital importance to the survival of all life on our planet.

In 2008, with my son Fabien, daughter Céline, and our team of divers, I set out to investigate, for the first time, all of our National Marine Sanctuaries. I am deeply appreciative of the research and education opportunities afforded by the National Marine Sanctuary program, and the inspiration, connection with and celebration of our oceans that they provide for millions of people.

The chance to broaden that inspiration, connection and celebration is before us. The designation of a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary would be an incredible opportunity for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. I urge you to initiate the process.

Best regards,



Jean-Michel Cousteau, President
Ocean Futures Society

cc: William Douros
West Coast Regional Director
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries,
99 Pacific Street, Suite 100F
Monterey, CA 93940

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