



March 15, 2018

Violet Cavanaugh
Northern Chumash Tribal Council
1177 Marsh Street, Suite 110
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Vice-Chair Cavanaugh and Members of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council:

Please accept my apology for not being able to attend today's meeting of your Council.

Like you, I am concerned by the Trump administration's plan to open up the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore from California to new oil and gas leasing. Governor Brown and I have taken every opportunity to make it clear to the Trump administration that the state of California is opposed to any new oil and gas leasing off our coast. This position is supported by the vast majority of Californians, who have opposed offshore oil and gas development for decades. Much of this opposition is rooted in the environmental devastation caused by the 1969 blowout of a well in the Santa Barbara Channel, which spewed an estimated three million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean, creating a 35-mile long oil slick along California's coast, killing thousands of birds, fish and sea mammals, and fouling miles of California's shoreline and beaches.

The state of California's 124 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and four National Marine Sanctuaries are particularly vulnerable to oil and gas exploration and production activities, given the resources they protect and their proximity known oil and gas reserves. These designations protect species and ecosystems and help fuel a vibrant coastal economy that generates more than \$44 billion a year. In addition, in the face of unprecedented risk associated with climate change and its resulting impacts on the ocean, MPAs and National Marine Sanctuaries play a critical role in ensuring the long-term health of our ocean ecosystems, helping build resilience and protecting the coastal livelihoods and economies that rely on a healthy ocean.

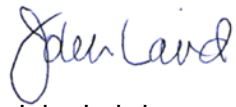
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has determined that the proposed Chumash National Marine Sanctuary has met the national significance criteria and management considerations described in the federal sanctuary nomination process and is consequently under consideration for national marine sanctuary designation. This Sanctuary would stretch from Gaviota, near the site of the 2015 Refugio oil spill, to Cambria, terminus of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. As articulated in the proposal submitted to NOAA, sanctuary status for this area would provide protection for submerged Chumash Tribal Sacred Sites, a prohibition on oil and gas exploration and development, protection of a unique and significant coastal ecosystem, increased tourism on the Central Coast, and increased funding for marine research on the Central Coast. Designation of this area as a National Marine Sanctuary would also, for the first time, explicitly elevate indigenous culture and historic use as primary core values along with protection of ocean habitat.

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As you may know, the Department of Commerce is currently reviewing National Marine Sanctuary and National Monument boundaries. We believe this review is an attempt by the Trump administration to adjust sanctuary and monument boundaries for the purposes of opening up of previously protected areas to oil and gas development and mineral extraction. This action is ironic because the National Marine Sanctuary Program was created by President Nixon in the wake of the Santa Barbara oil spill to protect important and unique areas of America's oceans. In August 2017, I submitted comments to the Department of Commerce expressing strong support for California's existing National Marine Sanctuaries. The state remains committed to protecting the West Coast's ocean and marine environment, our coastal economy, and California's natural resources. We are grateful for your partnership on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Laird". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Laird

Secretary for Natural Resources