



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

RE: Docket ID: DOI-2017-0002

July 11, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke and Secretary Ross:

We, the undersigned Massachusetts State Legislators, wish to express our concern over President Trump's Executive Order calling for a review of two dozen national monuments. This action threatens critical protections for our most precious natural resources and erodes the importance of the Antiquities Act, which has received bi-partisan support for over 100 years. Further, it runs counter to the United States's long-standing tradition of protecting our remarkable natural heritage and biological bounty.

Existing national monuments have already passed a rigorous designation process to confirm their need for protection, and therefore, a review of their monument status is unnecessary. The process makes use of the best available science to identify resources in need of protection, incorporates a management strategy that balances preservation with sustainable utilization, and includes a robust public approval process. The process is sufficiently comprehensive, and a review would be an inefficient use of time and energy.

In particular, we in Massachusetts wish to voice our support for a recently designated monument off the coast of our state: the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument.

Designated in September of 2016 by President Obama, the Canyons and Seamounts Monument is the first marine monument located off the coast of the continental U.S. Located 150 miles off Cape Cod, the Canyons and Seamounts Monument is composed of three undersea canyons and four nearby seamounts—the only ones in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean, which together support an extraordinary richness and diversity of ocean life. The submarine canyons (Oceanographer, Lydonia, and Gilbert) and the seamounts (Bear, Mytilus, Physalia, and Retriever) are home to diverse and fragile habitats, including abundant and vivid deep sea corals of otherworldly

beauty—some the size of small trees that take centuries to grow. The cold-water coral communities form the foundation of the deep-sea ecosystem, providing food, spawning habitat, and shelter for a diverse range of fish and invertebrate species.

The dynamic ocean environment of the canyons and seamounts attracts an array of ocean wildlife, including tunas and billfish, sea turtles, seabirds, and what may be the highest diversity of whales in the North Atlantic, including iconic species like sperm whales and North Atlantic right whales. Because of the area's remote location, depth, and rugged character, it is remarkably pristine, subject to scant fishing pressure, and remains a vital frontier for scientific discovery. Research expeditions continue to yield new and rare species, new understandings about ecological relationships, and renewed appreciation of the uniqueness of these deep-sea ecosystems.

Our oceans are in danger from overfishing and the proposed extraction of oil, gas, and other resources. These dangers are compounded by the impacts of climate change. In fact, the monument is located in a region that is warming faster than almost any other marine area in the world. As climate change brings about new environmental stresses, the monument will become even more critical for ushering in a scientific understanding of our ability to manage Massachusetts's marine resources and resource industries in our quickly changing world.

Secretaries Zinke and Ross, on behalf of our constituents and the people of Massachusetts, we urge you to support the decisions of past Presidents of both parties and conclude that this monument was properly designated and that it does in fact protect areas of critical scientific interest.

Respectfully,

Frank I. Smizik
15th Norfolk

Denise Provost
27th Middlesex

Michael J. Moran
18th Suffolk

Lori A. Ehrlich
8th Essex

Paul McMurtry
11th Norfolk

Jay R. Kaufman
15th Middlesex

Peter V. Kocot
1st Hampshire

Michelle M. DuBois
10th Plymouth

Diana DiZoglio
14th Essex

Chris Walsh
6th Middlesex

Brian M. Ashe
2nd Hampden

Claire D. Cronin
11th Plymouth

David M. Rogers
24th Middlesex

Ruth B. Balsler
12th Middlesex

Daniel M. Donahue
16th Worcester

Mary S. Keefe
15th Worcester

Paul Brodeur
32nd Middlesex

Patricia D. Jehlen
2nd Middlesex

Kay Khan
11th Middlesex

Carmin L. Gentile
13th Middlesex

Jack Lewis
7th Middlesex

Mike Connolly
26th Middlesex

James J. O'Day
14th Worcester

Natalie Higgins
4th Worcester

Christine P. Barber
34th Middlesex