



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JUN 28 2005

Deborah Streeter, Chair
MBNMS Advisory Council
299 Foam Street
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Ms. Streeter:

Thank you for your letter expressing the concerns of the Sanctuary Advisory Council of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) regarding the timing of the release of the MBNMS Draft Management Plan. I appreciate the Advisory Council's frustration with trying to plan outreach efforts and communicate with constituents to facilitate public input on the update of the management plan. Please know that I and the entire NMSP are as anxious as you for the completion of the JMPR and, like you, we want to ensure that it happens in a manner that ensures the best protection for sanctuary resources that we can provide and respects the process in which we have all been engaged.

The JMPR is a unique process for the National Marine Sanctuary Program that involves the review of the management plans for three national marine sanctuaries. This complex process, which is being attempted for the first time in marine ecosystem management, has facilitated coordination among the sites and their constituents that would not have been possible outside of such a major initiative. The ambition of this effort has demonstrated dramatic results and broken new ground within the program as well as in NOAA itself. I believe that attention to the process of reviewing the management plan and engaging our partners is as important as the outcome. A good process will lay a solid foundation for implementing the new initiatives developed through the JMPR.

Several of the proposed issues within the revised MBNMS Management Plan require considerable consultation with the Pacific Fishery Management Council and with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The issues have required our program to forge new relationships with these Federal fishery managers, which has delayed the completion as well as the release, of the environmental impact statement and proposed regulations. I want to assure you that the JMPR is, nonetheless, moving forward as we complete these critical consultations this summer.

I want to thank you for all of the Advisory Council's efforts throughout the JMPR process. The MBNMS Advisory Council continues to set the bar nationwide as a catalyst and gateway for ensuring the public's participation in sanctuary planning processes and programs. The JMPR has been a tremendous success thus far, and I believe this is due in large part to the passion and efforts of the Sanctuary Advisory Council and the MBNMS constituents. We appreciate the investment the Advisory Council has made in the future of the MBNMS.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Basta
Director
National Marine Sanctuary Program

