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9 November 2011

The Honorable Lynn Woolsey  
2263 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Woolsey,

On behalf of The Ocean Conservancy, I am writing in support of the reintroduction of HR 192 (S. 179), The Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries Boundary Modification and Protection Act. HR 192 safeguards the ecologically rich marine environments off the California coast, which support levels of biological diversity so high they exceed the biological productivity of tropical rain forests.

Through science-based advocacy, research, and public education, Ocean Conservancy informs, inspires and empowers people to speak and act for the oceans. Ocean Conservancy is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has offices in Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, with support from more than half a million members and volunteers. Ocean Conservancy has led efforts to develop and strengthen the National Marine Sanctuary Act, the National Marine Sanctuary System, and individual National Marine Sanctuaries at the national, regional and site-specific levels for nearly 30 years. Our staff has been deeply involved in the California sanctuaries in particular for decades and has served on the Sanctuary Advisory Councils for both the Channel Islands and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries.

The National Marine Sanctuaries Program's emphasis on comprehensive and ecosystem-based ocean protection makes it unique among federal programs. Our National Marine Sanctuaries also provide valuable opportunities to research the impacts of climate change, ocean acidification and other critical issues facing the marine environment. In California, the sanctuaries' proximities to large

urban populations and high volumes of coastal visitors make them particularly well suited for public education.

HR 192 would extend the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries north and westward to protect the Sonoma and southern Mendocino Coasts. These areas of great natural beauty and significant biodiversity are particularly susceptible to damage from human activities. Research has made it clear that certain waters that would be protected by this bill are vital to ecosystem productivity. Included in the area proposed for protection is the California Upwelling Ecosystem (CUE), one of only four major coastal upwelling systems on Earth and the only such upwelling system in the United States. These waters comprise only one percent of the ocean but produce 20 percent of the world's fish. Also proposed for protection under HR 192 is the Bodega Canyon, a unique ocean trench that is integral to Cordell Bank productivity.

In an area where so many livelihoods are dependent upon the health of the oceans, sanctuaries provide important protections for the California coast's multitude of species and all those who rely upon their health and abundance.

We are pleased to support this bill and look forward to helping ensure its passage into law.

Sincerely,

Emily Woglom  
Director of Government Relations  
Ocean Conservancy