

House Fisheries Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee
Hearing on
The Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine
Sanctuaries Boundary Modification and Protection Act, H.R. 1187
Written Testimony of
Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey
To be Submitted to the Record
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Thank you Chairwoman Bordallo, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to address the Subcommittee about H.R. 1187, the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries Protection and Modification Act. I know you have a busy schedule, and that there are many important issues vying for your attention, but after you hear and read the testimony on H.R. 1187, you will come to believe, as I do, that inclusion of all of the waters off of Sonoma County and southern Mendocino County into the National Marine Sanctuary system, is necessary and important to protecting and enhancing our most valuable marine resources.

Additionally, I would like to thank my neighbor, Representative Mike Thompson, who has worked with me to extend the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) up to Point Arena in Mendocino County, in his district. I'm very pleased he was able to join us today. I also want to thank Representative Wayne Gilchrest and Representative Jim Saxton, who are cosponsors of this bill. I am particularly thankful that Representative Gilchrest joined me as an original cosponsor when we introduced this bill in February.

Today, I'm pleased to be joined by Dr. Susan Williams, an accomplished and widely respected marine ecologist, and the Director of the UC Davis Marine Laboratory. Dr. Williams will provide compelling testimony on the unique ocean ecosystem of which the two biologically rich expansions areas are part, and how they are integral to the continued vitality of the existing Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries. When the two expansion areas provided for in H.R. 1187 are added to these two national marine sanctuaries, management can be truly ecosystem-based as required in the Sanctuaries' management plans and the National Marine Sanctuary Act.

A little over three years ago this bill was launched at a hearing I held in the chambers of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. Sonoma County, as you may know, has a long history of coastal protection, beginning with successful protests against a nuclear power plant that was to be built on a fissure of the San Andreas fault on Bodega Head that arguably was the beginning of the modern environmental movement. In the 1970's local residents rallied against intrusions on coastal access, won groundbreaking court cases, and eventually initiated Proposition 20 that created the California Coastal Commission.

In the following years, Sonoma County residents and neighbors in Marin and Mendocino Counties successfully defended the coast against massive development schemes,

wastewater discharges, and offshore development. The result today is a coast with immaculate beaches, thriving bird and sea life, and pristine waters. It was not to be unexpected that the full house at my hearing told me unequivocally that they wanted the protections and benefits of the Marine Sanctuary system – that they wanted the coast that they so cherished to be bequeathed to their grandchildren as beautiful and biologically rich as they found it.

With this history of coastal protection, it is not surprising that the Boards of Supervisors for Sonoma, Mendocino, Marin, and San Francisco Counties support my legislation. The bill has also gained state support from local members of the legislature, the State Coastal Commission, and the State Lands Commission. Both local and national environmental groups have rallied behind the bill including the Ocean Conservancy, the Sierra Club and Russian Riverkeeper. Many of them have submitted written testimony in support of the bill.

H.R. 1187 has the support of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, representing 25 different port and fishermen's marketing associations on the west coast and their local affiliate, the Bodega Bay Fishermen's Marketing Association, whose fishermen ply the waters of both National Marine Sanctuaries and the proposed expansion areas. These family fishermen know that their livelihoods depend on pollution-free waters and science-based resource protection. Because of years of cooperation with the Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary managers, and because PCFFA has from the beginning been closely involved in the development of this legislation, they welcome the expansion of the Sanctuaries.

One thing fishermen are very concerned about is the State of California's Marine Life Protection Act program. The fishermen want to ensure that if Marine Protected Areas, which ban or restrict fishing, are established in state waters of the GFNMS, they are done based on the best science and continually monitored for effectiveness in building up fish stock. The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary designation documents explicitly state that the Sanctuary program does not have the authority to regulate fishing. Our bill is very clear that fishing regulation is not its intent and recognizes that fishing regulation is the responsibility of the appropriate state and federal agencies. However, if MPAs are established in state waters of GFNMS and its expansion area, the MPAs will be benefitted with the protections against spills, discharges, and other harmful acts that are in statute and the regulations of GFNMS.

The expansion of these Sanctuaries is an economic plus for fishermen. The PCFFA's Zeke Grader points out in his written testimony that there have been occasions when the Sanctuary program went to regulators in support of fishermen's positions, resulting in positive outcomes protective of fisheries. H.R. 1187 requires future management plans to include research and educational and stewardship programs with fishermen increasing the likelihood of good science-based decisions.

It should also be mentioned that coastal tourism is big business in California, accounting for more than a \$10 billion contribution to the state's economy. Both Sonoma and

Mendocino Counties reap huge economic benefits from spotless beaches, clean water, and abundant wildlife. The Sonoma County Economic and Development Board in their written testimony share that the county has 7 million visitors annually and that 3 million visit our coastal state parks, all of which border the GFNMS expansion area. Visitors to the county provide \$1.14 billion in destination spending, over 15,000 jobs, and \$365 million in wages. Safeguarding our local economy is a major reason why our bill is supported by the Sonoma County Economic and Development Board, the Counties of Sonoma and Mendocino, the coastal town of Pt. Arena and the Russian River Chamber of Commerce, and many others.

The issue of funding is sure to come up in this hearing and I want to respond to that. I support full funding for all of our National Marine Sanctuaries and believe that if we are to truly heed the wisdom of the Pew Commission and the U.S. Commission on Oceans, we need to greatly increase Sanctuary budgets, as well as provide more funding for marine science research. However, until such a time that these budgets are increased, it still makes sense to expand GFNMS and CBNMS. History bares this out.

The Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1989, but it was not until 1997 that funds were appropriated specifically for CBNMS. Until that time, funding was piecemeal out of Washington and later shifted from the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. This was not an ideal situation, but designation provided new protection to marine life within its boundary; gave researchers the competitive edge to get important grants; and established CBNMS as an important area to protect. During that period Cordell Bank was selected as the number one habitat to be protected by the Habitat Committee of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

In 1992, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was established, and MBNMS' northern sector, about 1,300 nautical square miles, was put under the authority of the GFNMS, again as an unfunded responsibility of GFNMS. GFNMS was able to establish a network of volunteers, interested scientists, and other federal and state agencies to assist with education, research, and management. When an oil spill occurred in 1994, it resulted in over \$17 million being paid by the spiller for the cleanup and mitigation. Prior to Sanctuary designation, a larger and more damaging spill in 1986 resulted in fines of only \$5.4 million – 30 percent of the 1994 amount. It took ten years to collect the funds for the 1986 spill, 20 months for the 1994 spill. No one wants to collect this kind of money, but clearly designation paid off.

There are several important issues that will be raised in this hearing, including saline discharges from fishing vessels, the possible designation of a new sanctuary, and the proposed addition to the Cordell Bank NMS, which the Cordell Bank NMS Advisory Committee has requested. I want to assure the Subcommittee and other interested parties of my willingness to work with you to address these and other issues substantively.

As you know, these are crucial times for our oceans. We are in a new age where we are learning that our oceans, as vast as they are, are not so limitless that they cannot be

destroyed. We are in an age where once bountiful fisheries are collapsing, where thousands of species are on the verge of extinction.

It's time that we use the best science, the best management tools, and the most enlightened policies to protect and restore our oceans. H.R. 1187 deals with a relatively small area of our coast, but as the science tells us, a uniquely important area, filled with the richness of the sea powered by the strongest upwelling in North America. It's a place worth protecting and studying to safeguard our existing Sanctuaries, to preserve marine resources that are in rapid decline elsewhere, and to ensure the continuation of the local fishing and tourist economy.

Thank you.