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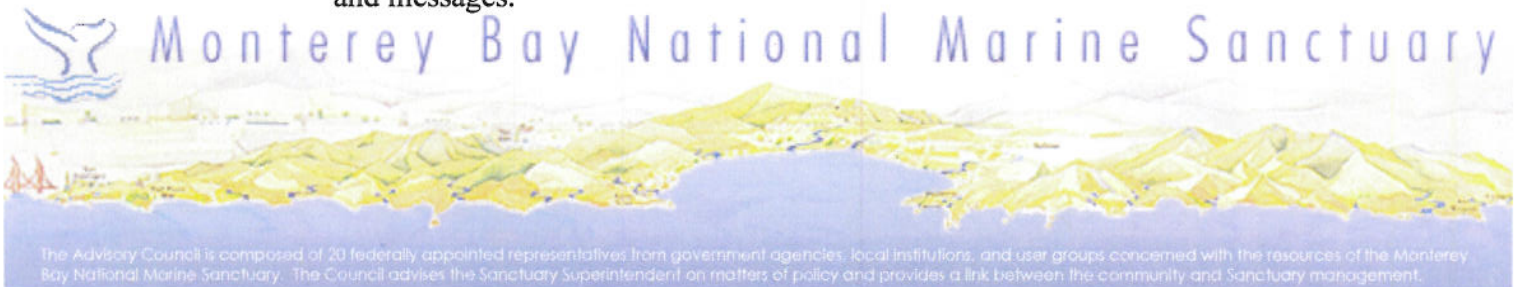
December 30, 2008

Mr. Daniel Basta
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1315 East West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Mr. Basta:

This letter is in response to your later dated July 25, 2008 calling for ways to engage national forums and key players to address the marine conservation problems the nation confronts. I brought this issue to the attention of our Sanctuary Advisory Council (advisory council) prior to and during our October 17, 2008 meeting. The advisory council identified the following possible national partners:

- National dive certification programs such as NAUI and PADI. One strategy could involve a kind of national marine sanctuary passport. Each of the sanctuaries would offer stamps or stickers to a passport holder who had dived in their respective sanctuary. Divers would be encouraged to fill out the passports by diving in each of the nation's sanctuaries. This could instill a greater appreciation for the marine resources protected by our sanctuaries and elevate awareness of and commitment to the need to protect them.
- National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) or the National Marine Educators Association (NMEA). In spite of all our outreach efforts, the general public does not have an adequate understanding of the term "ecosystem protection". We felt that collaborating with national educational organizations such as NSTA or NMEA would be a cost-effective way to reach a national audience with these messages. The MBNMS is doing this already.
- National Religious Partnership for the Environment, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Environmental Justice Program, the National Council of Churches of Christ Eco-justice Programs, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network. Advisory council members recognize that religious organizations are becoming a powerful voice for marine environmental protection in modern society, and that there could be tremendous benefit in partnering with one or more of them to develop and share marine resource conservation information and messages.

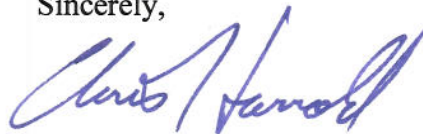


- National outdoor organizations specializing in aquatic activities such as kayaking and boating. Outdoorsmen throughout the nation belong to one or more national organizations that promote outdoor aquatic and wilderness activities. Establishing a partnership with one or more of these organizations could reach millions of people who are willing to commit to solutions to marine conservation problems.
- Advisory council members suggested taking the “Thank You Ocean” campaign nationwide, not just California.
- National marine conservation non-government organizations (NGO) such as The Ocean Conservancy. By partnering with a national NGO such as The Ocean Conservancy, sanctuaries could reach national audiences with messages about the nation’s special underwater places and the need to protect them.

I realize that this list is shy on strategy. To remedy this shortcoming, I plan to share this letter with our advisory council and ask that advisory council members willing to champion one or more of these ideas develop possible strategies for engagement. We can do this before the end of February 2009.

On behalf of the MBNMS advisory council, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this new concept. I look forward to the May 2009 national chairs and coordinators meeting in Alpena.

Sincerely,



Chris Harrold
MBNMS Advisory Council Chair