

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 2, 2016

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In September 2015, we wrote urging you to designate as a national monument an area of the Atlantic Ocean known as the New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts. We write to reiterate our call to preserve this undersea landscape and make this precious ecosystem the first marine national monument ever established in the Atlantic Ocean.

About 150 miles off the coast of New England, along the continental shelf, lies an aquatic treasure of unbelievable bounty. Though it is not apparent from the surface, beneath the ocean waves there is an abundance and diversity of sea life rivaled in few other places. The New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts area is home to at least 73 different species of deep sea corals – some that can live for a thousand years or longer. There are countless sharks, whales, dolphins, sea turtles, sea birds and a tremendous diversity of other animals and organisms; many rare and unusual. They inhabit a world of canyons that rivals the Grand Canyon in size and scale and underwater mountains that are higher than any east of the Rockies. These mountains – known as seamounts – rise as high as 7,700 feet from the ocean floor and are the only seamounts in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 affords you the authority to declare national monuments in areas containing “objects of historic or scientific interest,” thus to ensure that they receive proper care and management, as well as protection from damaging commercial activity. You have been a champion of using this law to provide permanent protection to irreplaceable environmental and historical places and property. Sixteen presidents have used this authority to create 150 monuments, including the Grand Canyon, the Grand Tetons, and the Statue of Liberty. Many of these were later re-designated as national parks.

The New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts area, a pristine hotspot of diverse and fragile wildlife and habitats, is deeply deserving of this designation, and we urge you to employ your authority under the Antiquities Act to protect this area. We recommend that the new national monument encompass the area outlined in the enclosed map, including eight canyons,

five of which are named (Oceanographer, Gilbert, Lydonia, Nygren and Heezen) and four seamounts (Bear, Physalia, Retriever and Mytilus). Scientists with New England's most respected aquariums have done an in-depth analysis that demonstrates that the area outlined on the map deserves this kind of protection from the water surface to the sea floor.

This area is just as precious as any national park, and its riches just as priceless. The reasons to designate it as a monument are clear, including the following:

- **Protect countless species from irreversible damage.** Many of the species in the proposed monument are highly sensitive to human activity. A monument designation would protect this part of the ocean from human intrusions that disturb marine life. This area may be relatively unexploited now, but advances in technology make it increasingly likely that commercial efforts could reach these highly vulnerable ecosystems.
- **Help make the ocean more resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.** As ocean waters warm and become more acidic due to their absorption of the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the biology for many plants and animals is disrupted. Limiting human intrusion in areas of the Atlantic Ocean will bolster the strength and resilience of species living there, helping them survive impending ocean acidification and warming. A healthier and more robust Atlantic ecosystem also helps ensure more productive fisheries overall.
- **Support economic activity that depends on healthy oceans.** Tens of thousands of people in our state and region are employed in the recreation and tourism sectors, including whale watching and seabird viewing. Designation of the monument will support these important contributors to our region's economy. At the same time, designation of this monument will curtail few current fishing practices, as relatively little seafood is caught in this area.
- **Advance science and research.** Important institutions in our state and region – including the University of Connecticut, the Mystic Aquarium, the New England Aquarium, and the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk – have identified numerous scientific research and educational opportunities within the living marine laboratories of the proposed monument area. These institutions will use new materials and knowledge gained from studying the monument to educate the students and residents of our state and the region about the value of the deep ocean.
- **Preserve natural history.** A monument designation would ensure this natural treasure is around for future generations to enjoy, appreciate and study.

You have been a leader in protecting marine environments, including taking a similar step to expand a marine monument in the Pacific Ocean. The time has come to create a monument in the Atlantic. We are joined by thousands of Connecticut residents, over 100 regional businesses, nearly 150 marine scientists, dozens of religious leaders, and major environmental organizations in our request. There is no better time than this year – the 100th

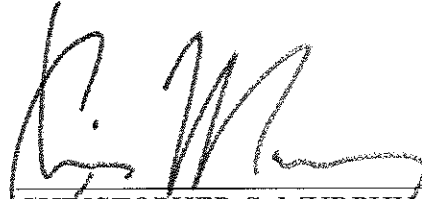
anniversary of our national park system – to establish another “blue park” and cement your legacy as a champion of environmental and historic preservation both on land and at sea.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

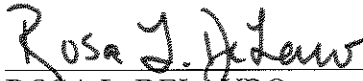
Sincerely,



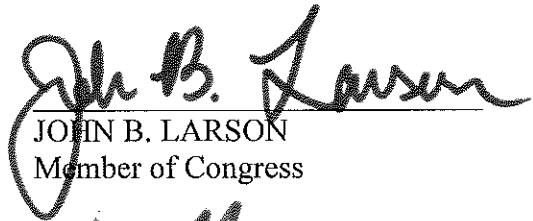
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate




CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



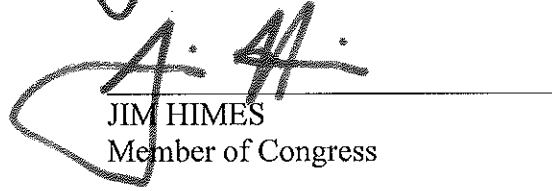
ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress



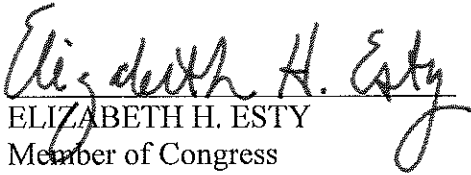
JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



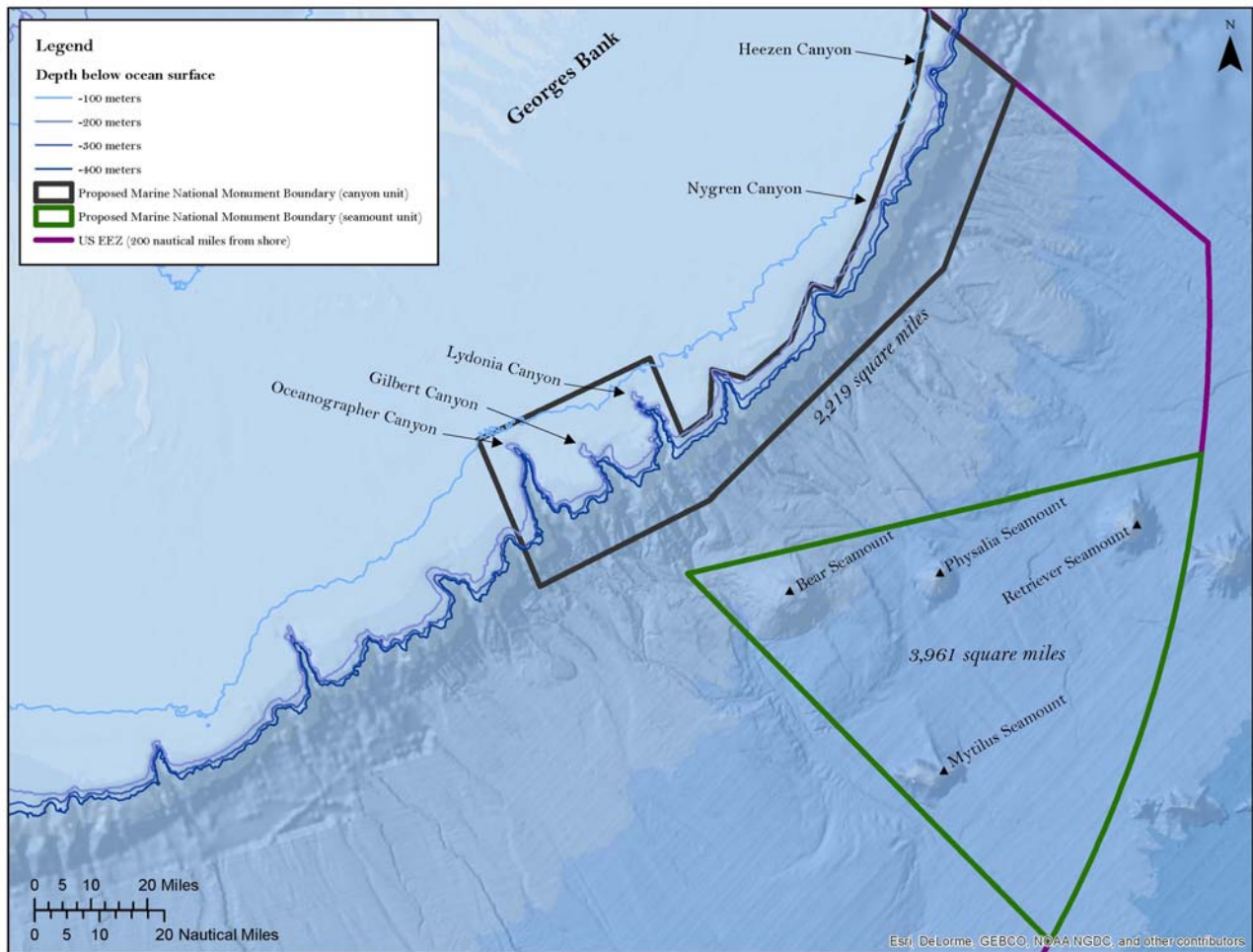
JIM HIMES
Member of Congress



ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Map of Proposed Monument Designation



Canyons Unit (using North American Datum 1983)

LONGITUDE	LATITUDE
-66.15720109	40.99449146
-66.58040097	40.59589155
-67.57800066	40.20699165
-68.21200045	40.12199168
-68.26800042	40.5269916
-67.62800062	40.59999157
-67.60096477	40.38801777
-67.49019671	40.41519671
-67.43774197	40.52475784
-67.33333349	40.47702935
-67.1518927	40.53750011
-67.02558054	40.65891401
-66.96109778	40.62640184
-66.79700089	40.75799152
-66.48200098	41.06599145
-66.35930101	41.23259141
-66.15720109	40.99449146

Seamounts Unit*

LONGITUDE	LATITUDE
-66.93142365	38.86613312
-67.7221216	40.0438509
-65.94585459	39.93958175

* between -65.94585459, 39.93958175 and -66.93142365, 38.86613312, the seaward line follows the EEZ, which is a curved arc.