

AMERICAN BLUEFIN TUNA ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 447 SALEM NH 03079

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2017 (Salem NH) – The American Bluefin Tuna Association applauds yesterday's decision, made by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), to not support the creation of a marine sanctuary in Hudson Canyon.

Yesterday, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), owners of the New York Aquarium, gave a one-hour presentation to the MAFMC on their proposal to create a marine sanctuary in Hudson Canyon at a regular meeting of the Council in Avalon NJ. This proposal has been accepted by NOAA Marine Sanctuaries into their "inventory" on February 23, 2017, thereby initiating a regulatory process. Subsequent discussion among Council members and attendees at this meeting culminated in a vote to not support this action.

WCS's main argument in support of their proposal is their contention that establishment of a marine sanctuary in Hudson Canyon would facilitate a prohibition on oil and gas development in the canyon area. Conspicuously absent from their argument, however, is the fact that on December 19, 2017, the Obama Administration, under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, has already permanently prohibited oil and gas exploration in the Canyons Region, including Hudson Canyon. The New York Times stated that the action taken in December may not be so easy for a subsequent administration to overturn because it carries the same legal weight as an action taken under the Antiquities Act.

Notwithstanding statements made by WCS at the meeting that sanctuary status would not affect fishing in the area, great concern was expressed by the Council for the fact that the Marine Sanctuary Act provides for a sanctuary to have ultimate statutory authority over fishing.

WCS, in their written proposal, gave equal weight to their argument that sanctuary status for Hudson Canyon would enhance protection for deep sea coral as they did their argument on protection from oil and gas exploration. However, at this meeting, WCS carefully avoided delving into the need for additional protection of deep sea coral, a wise decision given the fact that the MAFMC were instrumental in recently establishing these protections through a lengthy rulemaking process which has received accolades from the environmental community.

The MAFMC should be applauded for a bold decision taken at the appropriate time.

For further info, contact:

Rich Ruais, Executive Director

Tel: (603) 898-4715, Cell: (603) 490-4715, Email: rruais@aol.com