

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 13, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For centuries, the ocean has been critical to the economy and culture of Massachusetts. As Members of Congress representing Massachusetts, we are working to ensure our coastal communities continue to thrive in the 21st century. A healthy ocean is critical for healthy coastal economies. The ocean economy of Massachusetts is worth more than \$6 billion, according to the most recent economic data available. Given the unprecedented challenges our fishing industry, and the shore-side businesses that depend on it, have faced in recent years, we are acutely aware of the need for collaboration with our communities, the fishing industry, and other businesses that rely on the ocean and its resources.

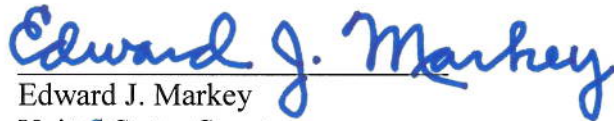
We understand you are considering using your authority to make national marine monument designations of a number of submarine habitats—five coral canyons, four submarine seamounts, and an underwater mountain range known as Cashes Ledge—in the New England region of the Atlantic Ocean.

As the Chairman of the New England Fisheries Management Council discussed in his statement at NOAA's September 15th public listening session in Rhode Island, the Council has long recognized the unique habitats of the deep canyons, seamounts and Cashes Ledge. The Council has had in place protections for Cashes Ledge for more than a decade and ultimately supported the continuation of protections for it in the Essential Fish Habitat amendment they adopted earlier this year. The Council is also currently considering management actions to protect Deep Sea corals in the region. Stakeholders not represented on the Council also conveyed their recognition of the conservation values of these areas.

While you have clear authority under the Antiquities Act to designate national monuments, we ask that you engage stakeholders further before making a final decision. We ask you to build on last month's listening session in Rhode Island by expanding your stakeholder engagement efforts to include additional opportunities for our Massachusetts constituents to express their views on the potential designations in the context of ongoing conservation efforts. We also ask that you provide more information on the potential designations, especially the objectives, geographic scope, and possible limits to activities, to help inform these additional discussions.

Thank you for your attention to these requests. We look forward to further discussions with you and your administration about these designations and other actions important to support the economies of our Massachusetts's coastal communities.

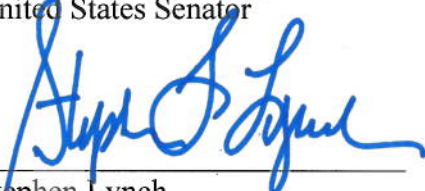
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress