

## House Votes to Expand Northern California's National Marine Sanctuaries

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Yesterday the House of Representatives unanimously passed legislation sponsored by Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-Palo Alto) to expand and add new protections for the National Marine Sanctuaries of Northern California. The Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries Boundary Modification and Protection Act (H.R. 1187), adds 1,200 nautical square miles to the two sanctuaries. The legislation also adds protective measures to the sanctuaries at the Gulf of the Farallones, Cordell Bank, and Monterey Bay.

"This is an important achievement for our region's precious marine habitats and coastal areas," said Rep. Eshoo. "This legislation will preserve these natural landmarks for future generations."

The House legislation makes the existing prohibition on oil and gas drilling in the sanctuaries permanent, bans commercial aquaculture except for existing shellfish farms, and prohibits vessels from dumping waste and bilge into these sensitive areas. The provisions of the legislation will improve the water quality and ensure that we maintain thriving populations of fish, whales, migratory birds, and other wildlife. The bill does not add any additional fishing restrictions.

"The National Marine Sanctuaries are an important resource that must be protected," said Eshoo. "This year we have seen a disturbing collapse in the salmon population in Northern California, highlighting again the vital importance of maintaining the integrity of our marine habitats."

Supporters of the bill include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Environmental Defense, The Ocean Conservancy, Environment America, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations, and Trout Unlimited.

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