

September 15, 2021

President Joseph Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your commitment to protect and restore our nation's most special and vulnerable places for the benefit of all people today and for generations to come. Today is the fifth anniversary of the creation of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument on September 15, 2016. Recent events have only underscored the importance of the area and the need for its protection. The 61 undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to restore full protections for this incredible area, as well as Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante.

The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts – the first marine national monument in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean – protects unique species and habitats, valuable ecological resources, and the fragile ocean ecosystem against adverse human activities. This summer, NOAA's *Okeanos Explorer* deployed a remotely operated vehicle in the monument on one of the summits of the multi-peaked Retriever Seamount. The dive revealed “a dense, high-biomass, high-diversity coral garden” that impressed all of the scientists. A notably large colony of bamboo coral, referred to as a “land of the giants” by one of the scientists, is estimated to be approximately 1,600 years old.

In July, the New England Aquarium conducted [an aerial survey](#) of the monument's canyons unit that spotted truly amazing ocean wildlife and gathered observations that deepen scientific knowledge of the area. The survey – the 11<sup>th</sup> in a series since the monument was established – observed a sperm whale, whale shark, pilot whales, ocean sunfish, and four different species of dolphin. A common theme was seeing mother calf pairs and animals that depend on squid for their diet.

The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is an underwater treasure – for the American public, for scientific discovery, and for the incredible ocean wildlife it supports. Last year, President Trump stripped the monument's protections and allowed commercial fishing in this protected area, [reducing species protection](#). The monument and the refuge it provides for endangered whales, centuries-old deep-sea corals, fish, and seabirds were immediately put at risk.

More than 200 days have passed since Executive Order 13990 was signed. Since then, Secretary Haaland reportedly has recommended fully restoring protections to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts (as well as Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante). We urge you to heed the Secretary's recommendation to restore full protection to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument and erase the legacy of the illegal, unfounded rollbacks by President Trump.

Respectfully,

Azul

Blue Frontier

Blue Ocean Society for Marine Conservation\*

Center for American Progress

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Coastal Studies\*

Citizens Campaign for the Environment\*

Clean Water Action

Connecticut Audubon Society\*

Connecticut League of Conservation Voters\*

Connecticut Ornithological Association\*

Conservation Law Foundation\*

Earthjustice

Environment America\*

Environment Maine\*

Environmental League of MA\*

GreenLatinos

Gundalow Company\*

Healthy Ocean Coalition\*

Hispanic Access Foundation

Inland Ocean Coalition

Inland Ocean Coalition - CU Boulder Chapter

International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute

Jenkinson's Aquarium

Maine Conservation Voters\*

Marine Conservation Institute

Mass Audubon\*

Menunkatuck Audubon Society\*

Monterey Bay Aquarium

Mystic Aquarium\*

National Aquarium

National Audubon Society

National Ocean Protection Coalition

National Wildlife Federation

Natural Resources Defense Council

New England Aquarium\*

New England Coastal Wildlife Alliance\*

NH Audubon\*

Northern Hall: The Infinite Classroom\*

NY4WHALES\*

Ocean Conservancy

Ocean Conservation Research

Oceana

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Oregon Coast Aquarium

Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium

Save the Sound\*

Sea Education Association, Inc.\*

Seacoast Science Center\*

Shark Stewards

Surfrider Foundation

TAO\*

TBD Economics, LLC

Tennessee Aquarium

The Ocean Project\*

The Wilderness Society

ThinkOcean Society\*

Whale and Dolphin Conservation\*

Wildlife Conservation Society

Women Working for Oceans\*

Youth Environmental Alliance

\* *New England-based organization*