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APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

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February 23, 2016

John Armor
Acting Director
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Armor,

On behalf of the Friends of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (FAINL), I submit this letter of support for the nomination of the Greater Chequamegon Bay Area as a National Marine Sanctuary on Lake Superior. We believe this area would be worthy of your other 14 most precious underwater treasures and we could use your help in acting as responsible stewards now and for future generations.

We urge you to consider the vital importance of the area's significant natural and cultural resources to not only our coastal communities and the Ojibwe nation, but also to the continuing integrity of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and all of Lake Superior.

The National Park Service strives to protect and preserve the archipelago of 21 islands, a mainland shoreline, 9 historic lighthouses and up to a quarter mile out, but that does not include the marine habitat that surrounds and so closely interacts with the parks' valuable resources. The park's interpretive message includes both natural and cultural stories that begin, end and include the waters beyond its boundaries. A national marine sanctuary would help us broaden that sphere of understanding to include the shipwrecks, important fish habitat, a complex ecosystem, historic water trails, migration routes, and Ojibwe traditional ways to name a few. A national marine sanctuary would help us all understand and then proactively co-manage and steward a healthy, resilient marine habitat that continues to support growing subsistence, recreational and commercial interests while preserving a sense of the past.

We believe FAINL's ability to promote an appreciation for, and preservation of, the natural environment and cultural heritage of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore would be significantly enhanced by a national marine sanctuary designation and your mission. We work to connect people with the history, beauty, and adventure of the national lakeshore, increase community involvement in and outside the park, raise funds to support park projects, programs and events, and support educational, recreational and resource protection efforts. Together we could partner to promote public awareness and understanding of the area's marine resources, support and help fund scientific research, and promote a proactive approach to lake protection that includes education.



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We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with over 700 supporters who, in working closely with the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, want to insure our natural and cultural resources are unimpaired for future generations. We all feel a personal connection to the extraordinary beauty of the Apostle Islands. We do not have the capabilities, like NOAA, to track long-term changes (i.e. climate, invasive species, human influences) to our Greater Chequamegon Bay Area, base management decisions on an ecosystem wide approach, and create broad common-ground solutions through community involvement.

Subsequently we realize the value of adding a national marine sanctuary to Lake Superior, the greatest of the Great Lakes and believe it would be an invaluable addition to the nation's National Marine Sanctuary System.

Sincerely,

Erica Peterson

President, Friends of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore