



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JAN 27 2017

Patrick Pletnikoff, Mayor
P.O. Box 929
St. George, AK 99591-0929

Dear Mayor Pletnikoff:

Thank you for submitting the nomination for the proposed St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. We appreciate the interest expressed by the Unangan people of St. George, other tribal groups throughout Alaska, scientists, and the public in support of the nomination.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) has completed our detailed review of the nomination and determined that this nomination meets the national significance criteria and management considerations. Thus, we have added the nomination to the inventory of areas NOAA may consider in the future for national marine sanctuary designation.

Local support is critical to the success of any nomination and we strive for common ground on what a national marine sanctuary could mean for St. George Island. Given the concerns expressed by the St. George Traditional Council and others relative to how a sanctuary designation might affect plans to expand the harbor at St. George, we would like to bring together these different groups to address their concerns and clarify any misunderstandings. We will initiate these meetings in the coming months and would like the City of St. George to be an active participant. ONMS West Coast Regional Director Bill Douros will reach out to you soon to begin discussions about these meetings. We believe such a process would benefit the community, should the nomination move forward in the future towards designation as a national marine sanctuary.

Sincerely,

John A. Armor, Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

