



JOHN MOOLENAAR
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF APPROPRIATIONS
MICHIGAN SENATE

36TH DISTRICT
715 FARNUM BUILDING
P.O. BOX 30036
LANSING, MI 48909-7536
PHONE: (517) 373-7946
TOLL-FREE: (866) 305-2136
FAX: (517) 373-2678
senjmoolenaar@senate.michigan.gov
www.SenatorJohnMoolenaar.com

APPROPRIATIONS, VICE CHAIR
SUBCOMMITTEES:
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
HEALTH, CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, VICE CHAIR
CAPITAL OUTLAY
STANDING COMMITTEES:
VETERANS, MILITARY AFFAIRS
AND HOMELAND SECURITY, CHAIR
OUTDOOR RECREATION AND
TOURISM
REDISTRICTING

September 16, 2011

Dear Senator Levin,

Kindly accept this letter in support of legislation S. 485, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve Boundary Modification Act, and its expansion of the sanctuary's boundaries.

This act would extend the sanctuary's current boundaries of 448 square miles of Michigan's Great Lakes to include the waters off Alcona, Alpena and Presque Isle Counties and expand the sanctuary to 4,085 square miles of water area. An average of 60,000 people visit the Thunder Bay Sanctuary and the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center on an annual basis. These visitors are informed of the efforts to preserve the Great Lakes, increasing the knowledge of their importance.

Not only does the sanctuary boast historical and archaeological significance, but it provides economic benefits as well. Thunder Bay attracts many divers, boaters and other tourists, supplying local communities with much needed business. Expanding the boundaries of the sanctuary would increase the economic benefits further into Northeast Michigan, effectively creating jobs without spending additional federal funds or taxpayer dollars. Also, this legislation would nearly double the amount of offshore shipwrecks protected under the current boundaries. Increasing protected shipwrecks supports the rich maritime history of the region, by boosting an already popular diving destination, booked through next year.

The city of Rogers City passed a resolution in 2006, showing their strong interest and full support of this expansion. In addition, Alcona County, the City of Alpena, Alpena County, Presque Isle Township, and Huron Shores have expressed their overwhelming support.

Thank you for your consideration on behalf of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to further discuss my support.

Sincerely,

John Moolenaar
State Senator

cc: The Honorable Beach Hall, Mayor of Rogers City