



February 16, 2017

Russ Green
Regional Coordinator, Northeast and Great Lakes Region
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
University of Wisconsin – Sheboygan
One University Drive
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Re: NOAA-NOS-2016-0150, Proposed Wisconsin – Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary

Dear Mr. Green,

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), I thank you for the opportunity to comment on Docket: NOAA-NOS-2016-0150, the notice of proposed rulemaking and availability of the draft environmental impact statement and management plan for a Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary.

NMMA is the leading recreational marine industry trade association in North America, representing 1,400 boat, engine and accessory manufacturers. Recreational boating is a strong past time in Wisconsin and the Great Lakes. Wisconsin is one of the top five boating states in the United States and has over 613,000 registered boats. The recreational boating industry contributes \$4.8 billion and over 25,000 jobs to the state’s economy.

NMMA supports NOAA’s proposed alternatives which will strengthen the recreational and cultural values of the proposed marine sanctuary’s submerged historical maritime resources. NMMA strongly encourages the protection of recreational boating and boating activities that many divers and other enthusiasts often use to access the shipwrecks within the sanctuary’s boundaries. NOAA’s proposed Regulatory Alternative B includes the installation of permanent mooring systems at sanctuary shipwreck sites, NMMA fully supports this installation and hopes that NOAA will ensure that these systems are installed in such a way that there is a reasonable distance between the mooring buoy and shipwreck sites.

NMMA thanks NOAA’s sanctuary program for mirroring the success of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary with the proposed Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary. Like Thunder Bay, the Wisconsin-Lake Michigan economy depends on recreational, historical and cultural tourism. The recreational boating, fishing, and diving industries as well as the tourism industry are vital to the area’s economy, heritage and communities. The proposed Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary has the opportunity to strengthen the recreational boating industry as well as their maritime heritage by teaching the public that recreational boaters are environmental stewards who want to protect resources for future generations.

For these reasons we support the preferred alternatives for the Wisconsin-Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary. Should you have any questions, please contact me at ddickerson@nmma.org.

Sincerely,

David Dickerson
Vice President, State Government Relations
NMMA

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