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**Subject:** Congressman Young Renews Efforts to Prevent Sweeping Marine Sanctuary Designations in Alaska  
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## **Congressman Young Renews Efforts to Prevent Sweeping Marine Sanctuary Designations in Alaska**

*Local Governments and Communities Have Shared Deep Concern for Unwanted and Unnecessary Aleutians Islands National Marine Sanctuary Proposal*

**Washington, D.C. – Alaskan Congressman Don Young** has renewed his efforts to push back against proposals to unnecessarily harm local economies and communities by unilaterally closing off vast areas of Alaska to critical economic activities like fishing, natural resource development and marine commerce. In order to protect Alaska's interests, and halt the first of what is bound to be a number of nominations pushed by outside interest groups, Congressman Young has introduced legislation (H.R. 332) to prohibit the Secretary of Commerce from designating new marine sanctuaries in Alaska under the National Marine Sanctuary Act, without first gaining the approval of Congress.

**Congressman Young shared this statement following the introduction of his legislation:**

*"When NOAA first announced its decision to open up the National Marine Sanctuary designation process, I said it was flawed and could result in dire consequences to our local economies and prevent responsible development of our resources. Unfortunately, as predicted, this has resulted in attempts by environmentalists and outsider groups to use the National Marine Sanctuaries process to restrict activities in vast swaths of Alaska's waters.*

*“Proposals of this magnitude must come from the ground up and include support from our local communities, marine industries, and fisherman – both commercial and recreational. As I feared, this has not been the case as numerous resolutions and letters from local governments and communities have poured into my office opposing the December nomination to establish the Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary.”*

Congressman Young's legislation was originally introduced in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, following an announcement by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that it would reform its nomination process for new national marine sanctuaries, including areas stretching 200 miles from Alaska's coast known as the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). His bill would remove the ability for the federal agency to make unnecessary designations and block critical fishing, shipping, and other economic activity in our waters without first gaining approval from Congress and properly consulting the communities that depend on it.

In December 2014, a cabal of environmental interest groups –led by the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) – nominated the entire Aleutian Island archipelago to become the nation's largest marine sanctuary. Without local community involvement or support, the proposal to close 545,000 square miles of federal waters off the coast of Alaska was sent to NOAA for consideration.



Numerous groups and organizations in the region have shared their opposition for the Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary, saying further protections are unwarranted and would do little to improve the sustainability of the region while significantly harming the economy, livelihood and survivability of the region.

**Local Opposition to the Aleutian Islands National Marine Monument:**

**King Cove Corporation:**

“Although NOAA’s nomination process clearly states that ‘every nomination starts at the community level’ we were not consulted about this outsider effort and we are not aware of ANY local support from our community.”

[\\*Click here](#) to read more.

**Akutan Traditional Council:**

“The Akutan Traditional Council strongly opposes the designation of an Aleutian Island National Marine Sanctuary. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) made the original nomination and it is now at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)... The only entity from Alaska to sign this nomination regarding the Aleutians was the Eyak Preservation Council, which is funded by outside environmental sources with no affiliation in the Aleutians.”

[\\*Click here](#) to read more.

**Akutan Corporation:**

“The proposed sanctuary would endanger our ability to work and provide for our families.”

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**Quagan Tayagungin Tribe:**

“This proposed marine sanctuary is unwanted and unnecessary, and would endanger our economy, our livelihood, and likely result in a mass exodus of the region as people struggle to find a place where they can make a living to survive. This would be detrimental to our cultures, our identities, and our family units.

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**City of Sand Point, AK Resolution:**

“WHEREAS, the local people who have been good steward of this region for generations object to the audacity of those who propose to designate this vast area, our home, as a ‘sanctuary’”

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**Aleutians East Borough Assembly Resolution:**

"WHEREAS, the Aleutians East Borough Assembly is not currently aware of ANY local support from local regional communities, tribes or local groups for this nomination"

\*[Click here](#) to read more.

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