



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Under Secretary of Commerce**  
**for Oceans and Atmosphere**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 10, 2023

Mr. Doug Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Office of the Commissioner  
1255 West 8th Street  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Mr. Vincent-Lang:

Thank you for your letter requesting the removal of the St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and Alaġum Kanuuġ National Marine Sanctuary nominations from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Inventory of Successful Nominations.

The sanctuary nomination process and the sanctuary designation process are two separate, distinct processes that have differing levels of community and stakeholder involvement. While the St. George Unangan Heritage National Marine Sanctuary and Alaġum Kanuuġ National Marine Sanctuary nominations are both in the Inventory of Successful Nominations, inclusion does not guarantee that NOAA will begin the designation process. NOAA is not considering initiating the designation process for either site at this time.

Though both areas may remain in the Inventory of Successful Nominations, NOAA is not moving forward with a national marine sanctuary designation. Should NOAA decide to move forward with designation, the process is both highly public and participatory – and often takes several years to complete. We have prepared the attached document that addresses some of the other questions we have received from you and regional stakeholders.

We recognize the State of Alaska's concern and continued interest in the St. George Unangan Heritage and Alaġum Kanuuġ National Marine Sanctuary nominations and designation processes, and we will keep you informed in advance of any new Federal actions and announcements. NOAA also remains committed to coordinating with the State of Alaska, communities, stakeholders, and all relevant partners on any actions pertaining to these nominations.

THE ADMINISTRATOR



Mr. Doug Vincent-Lang  
Page 2

If you have further questions, please contact Makeda Okolo, Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-4981 or [makeda.okolo@noaa.gov](mailto:makeda.okolo@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Spinrad", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad  
Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator

Enclosure



Exec Ecorr - NOAA Service Account <exec.ecorr@noaa.gov>

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## NOAA HQ AUTOPEN Request: Nomination of National Marine Sanctuaries (Package 23-0087288)

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Larry Thomas - NOAA Federal <larry.v.thomas@noaa.gov>

Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 10:07 AM

To: Exec Ecorr - NOAA Service Account <exec.ecorr@noaa.gov>

Cc: Kelly Quickle - NOAA Federal <kelly.quickle@noaa.gov>, Denise Johnson - NOAA Federal <denise.l.johnson@noaa.gov>, Rebecca Waddington - NOAA Federal <rebecca.waddington@noaa.gov>, Michelle West - NOAA Federal <michelle.b.west@noaa.gov>, ExecAdvisor UNSEC - NOAA Service Account <execadvisor.unsec@noaa.gov>

Approved and esigned memo attached.

Very Respectfully,

LCDR Larry V. Thomas Jr  
Executive Advisor  
Office of the Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere  
[1401 Constitution Ave, NW](#)  
[Washington, DC 20230](#)  
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