

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

While H.R. 905, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve Boundary Modification Act, was reported out of the Natural Resources Committee by unanimous consent, Members do have concerns about the cost of the legislation to the federal taxpayer.

This legislation would increase the size of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary by almost nine times its current size. The current sanctuary and the area to be added are all waters and submerged lands of the State of Michigan, yet the federal government will be required to fund the costs associated with this expansion. This cost is estimated by the Congressional Budget Office at more than double the current budget for the sanctuary.

At a time when the costs for the enormous new Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument offshore Hawaii have been added to the National Marine Sanctuary Program without additional appropriations, the entire sanctuary program could suffer as a result of this legislation. The National Marine Sanctuaries Act includes a statutory moratorium on new designations enacted due to concerns about funding levels. Congress imposed this moratorium because of concerns that the National Marine Sanctuary system would grow without money to back up the burden on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Other federal programs such as the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System have serious maintenance backlogs that have been clearly documented by this Committee. The National Marine Sanctuary Program has escaped this problem largely due to this language restricting growth of the program unless sufficient funds are available.

Finally, the National Marine Sanctuary Program has enjoyed popular support for many years. One of the reasons for this popularity is that the program allows multiple uses of the offshore areas included within the program. I am pleased that H.R. 905 will not add any statutory restrictions on existing or future uses of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

DOC HASTINGS.

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