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Demand Public Debates Before NOAA Takes Jurisdiction Over Lake Michigan

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. - Starting Monday, March 13, 2017, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will begin a series of four meetings along the Lake Michigan coast to advance their mission to take jurisdiction of the Lake through a federal program known as National Marine Sanctuaries. Citizens for Responsible Zoning and Landowner Rights (CRZLR) is calling for an immediate halt to the Sanctuary process so that real public debate can occur, which has not happened to this point.

Without authorization, NOAA has assumed the responsibility for protecting shipwrecks in the Great Lakes as one of their duties. Shipwrecks in the Great Lakes are currently protected under state laws from plunder and looting. Indeed, shipwrecks were never mentioned in the 1972 "Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act" (MPRSA) which was intended to stop the dumping of toxic wastes, garbage, and other harmful materials into the oceans.

NOAA is being deceitful by not disclosing all the rules and regulations that are part of a Sanctuary designation, which would restrict exploration for energy resources and the potential to restrict nearly all commercial fishing in the designated area of the Lake.

Proponents and NOAA officials describe the Lake Michigan Sanctuary as an opportunity to protect wrecks, enhance tourism, and create jobs. But an economic study commissioned by NOAA and conducted by the University of Michigan Institute of Research on Labor, Employment and the Economy (IRLEE) found that after 12 years of existence, the Thunder Bay NMS in Lake Huron had failed to produce meaningful economic results.

Therefore, CRZLR is calling for an immediate halt to the Sanctuary process. We must restart this process so that citizens on both sides of the issue have an opportunity to voice their opinions. We strongly believe that the Wisconsin Legislature and all 72 counties need to be involved in deciding this proposal as it will have broad and serious implications for the entire State of Wisconsin, business interests and fishing related interests."