



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

April 26, 2012

The Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

We write today to bring to your attention our concerns with the National Park Service's (NPS) recently released draft General Management Plan (GMP) for Biscayne National Park (BNP). The GMP for Biscayne is intended to serve as a framework to guide visitor experience opportunities, management of visitor use, and development of facilities for the next 15 to 20 years.

Biscayne National Park is one of the busiest in the nation in terms of fishing and boating. It supports nearly 10 million angling trips each year. We are very concerned about the NPS's plan to establish a 10,522-acre marine reserve – or no-fishing zone – and several “no combustion engine zones” within BNP. This designation would essentially halt fishing and boating in certain areas of the park.

Florida is the most popular recreational fishing and boating state in the nation. According to data from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Florida's approximately 2 million saltwater anglers annually contribute approximately \$3 billion in retail sales, 50,000 jobs, and over \$345 million in state and local tax revenues. Similarly, the boating industry supports over 200,000 jobs and over \$16 billion in economic impact statewide each year, with a substantial portion of that economic output occurring in South Florida.

Recognizing the substantial economic contribution of the recreational fishing and boating industry in Florida, in 2007, the NPS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the FWC, specifically stating that the FWC and the NPS will provide for recreational and commercial fishing and opportunities for the angling public **by seeking the least restrictive management actions necessary.**

But the measures proposed in the NPS plan represent the most extreme tools available for making fishery management modifications in BNP, ignoring alternative ways to achieve the desired resource improvements without sacrificing the public's ability to access and enjoy the park.

Furthermore, activities conducted by federal agencies anywhere in Florida are subject to the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), and must be fully consistent with state authorities

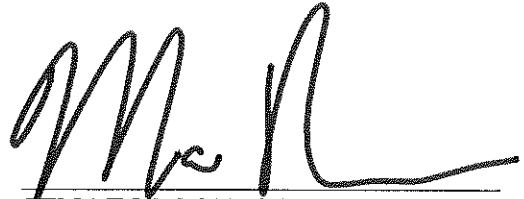
included in the Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP). We believe that as proposed, the GMP is not fully consistent with those state authorities. And we are concerned it ignores both the cooperative nature of the MOU and the role of state jurisdiction.

Secretary Salazar, because the duration of the GMP will be at least a decade, it is important we get it right. We urge you to work with the NPS to reconsider the proposed GMP and working cooperatively with the Florida FWC. Together they can revise the management plan to ensure it will conserve the Park's valuable natural resources but will also maintain public access for anglers and boaters and reinstitute the appropriate Federal-state agency relationship so important to successful fisheries management. We appreciate your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



SENATOR BILL NELSON



SENATOR MARCO RUBIO