

Rep. Allor offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 222.

A resolution to express support for the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and oppose any reduction in its boundaries.

Whereas, The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is one of fourteen U.S. marine protected areas and the only one located in the Great Lakes. The 4,300-square-mile sanctuary holds nearly 100 known shipwrecks—covering more than 150 years of Great Lakes commerce—remarkably preserved in Lake Huron's cold, fresh waters; and

Whereas, Jointly managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the state of Michigan, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary plays an important role in preserving our nation's marine heritage and providing opportunities for future discovery, research, and education. In addition to shipwrecks, the sanctuary encompasses other important cultural and natural features related to maritime heritage including lifesaving stations, lighthouses, historic boats and ships, commercial fishing camps, and working ports. Geological evidence suggests undiscovered prehistoric archaeological sites may also exist; and

Whereas, The United States Secretary of Commerce is currently conducting a review of all designations and expansions of national marine sanctuaries within the last 10 years. Under Executive Order 13795, Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy, the President of the United States directed the review of the budgetary impacts of the costs of managing the sanctuary, the adequacy of consultations with affected state and tribal governments prior to designation, and opportunity costs associated with potential energy and mineral exploration; and

Whereas, Nearly 3,900 square miles of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary could be impacted by the federal review. Just 448 square miles when initially designated in 2000, the sanctuary was expanded in 2014 to cover 4,300 square miles. The expansion increased the number of protected shipwrecks and opened up new opportunities to study shipwreck sites and maritime history in America; and

Whereas, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary attracts shipwreck divers and tourists and provides an economic boost to charter boat businesses, dive shops, bike rentals, outfitters, and travel and tourism companies. In past years, recreational activity associated with the sanctuary has provided \$92 million in annual sales, \$35.8 million in personal income to residents of coastal cities located near the sanctuary, and 1,704 jobs. In 2015, over 95,000 people visited the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center which is associated with the sanctuary; and

Whereas, Energy and mineral exploration is not appropriate within the sanctuary. Michigan has banned offshore drilling of oil in the Great Lakes since 1982. Congress enacted a temporary ban on offshore drilling in the Great Lakes in 2001 and made the federal ban permanent in 2005. The oil and gas drilling ban is necessary to protect this unique natural resource that provides drinking water and recreational opportunities and supports food production, business, and transportation for all U.S. citizens; and

Whereas, Maintaining the current boundaries of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary supports the rural coastal communities of northeast Michigan as well as protects the health and safety of millions of people who call the Great Lakes Basin home; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we support the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and oppose any reduction in its boundaries; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of Commerce.