To: City Commissioners
        City Manager

Date: February 17, 2015

Re: Sanctuary Process

Dear Leaders,

We would like to thank the Commission for taking the time to consider our recommendation on this resolution.

As we all know, the marine environment plays a key role in our economy and quality of life. Our unique and fragile ecosystem is a driving force behind our tourism economy, and the health of our fisheries is the foundation of our commercial and charter fishing industries. The long-term future of Key West's economy depends upon the continuing health of the Marine Sanctuary and surrounding waters.

Likewise, NOAA is one of the only organizations that has conducted long-term, in-depth research on the many factors that affect our surrounding seas. It is because of this that we urge the Commission to not prematurely draft a resolution against the as yet undetermined management alternatives that will be contained in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that NOAA is currently writing. This DEIS will not be completed for many months, after which there will be a three-month forum for citizen input. This will give the community time to understand the management alternatives and what it means for us, as well as to directly address NOAA with community concerns.

The Commission will have ample time to pass a resolution once the DEIS is published. Certainly, an issue that carries so much weight with regards to the future of our economy and the health of our environment warrants careful consideration.

Again, we ask that the Commission wait until the DEIS is complete and there has been time for public comment before passing a resolution against any of the potential management alternatives that the DEIS may contemplate.

Thank you for your time.

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Key to the Caribbean – Average yearly temperature 77° F.