

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Sanctuary Advisory Council 2005 Annual Report¹

Sanctuary Advisory Council Profile

The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS or Sanctuary) established a Sanctuary Advisory Council (Advisory Council or Council) in 1998 to enhance opportunities for public involvement in Sanctuary management and to support the process of management plan revision. The Council has twenty-one voting members, ten representing various local, state, and federal government partners and eleven representing a variety of community interests (conservation, education, research, recreational fishing, commercial fishing, tourism, non-consumptive recreation, business, Chumash community and the public at-large). The Council meets bi-monthly and has formed a number of active working groups, including those focused on conservation, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, education, research, and Chumash community involvement.

Major Achievements and Milestones

In 2005, perhaps the Advisory Council's greatest accomplishment was the unanimous adoption of a set of comprehensive recommendations put forth by the Conservation Working Group that call for CINMS to begin addressing a variety of water quality protection issues. Development of an extensive water quality report that included the recommendations (available on line here: <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/news.html>) evolved over the course of more than a year. In September the Council unanimously recommended that CINMS, in conjunction with partners, take progressive steps with regard to water quality research, monitoring, regulations, policy issues, education and outreach actions. These Council recommendations have helped inform and ramp up CINMS efforts to develop a water quality protection program as called for in the Sanctuary's draft management plan.

The Council took many other important actions in 2005 representing a variety of achievements and serving to further legitimize the Sanctuary Advisory Council as an effective change agent in the community. These additional actions and accomplishments are described below.

Council Recommendations and Sanctuary Decisions

Recommendations on Addressing Water Quality

As described above, throughout the year, the Conservation Working Group led efforts to research the issue of water quality and associated potential threats to the Sanctuary environment. Several discussions of their interim findings were raised at Council meetings. At the September 23rd meeting, the Council voted unanimously to forward to the Sanctuary Manager the Conservation Working Group's final report, *A Water Quality Needs Assessment for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, which includes background information on sources of water quality impairment, and information on the current status of and gaps within local and regional water quality research and monitoring, jurisdictions, regulations, policy, public education and outreach. The report also contains a suite of recommendations and a request that Sanctuary staff report back to the Council on steps that can be taken to implement the recommendations. The report includes four sets of recommendations. The first set is focused on water quality planning, the second on research and monitoring, the third deals with regulatory and policy issues, and a fourth set of recommendations focuses on education and outreach.

¹ Adopted by the Sanctuary Advisory Council on January 20, 2006.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

Water Quality Action Planning Approach:

- Pursue management activities that maintain and improve water quality conditions that support the Sanctuary's natural and cultural resources, as well as recreational uses in the Sanctuary.

Research and Monitoring Recommendations (General):

- Determine the issues that will drive Sanctuary water quality action planning, and frame research and monitoring questions with the purpose of better understanding how water quality factors affect these key issues.
 - Compile and characterize existing available water quality-related data (identified in this report) from various long-term research efforts in the SBC region.
 - Identify water quality monitoring needs and develop monitoring plan for Sanctuary waters based on the framed research and monitoring questions and the priorities described in this recommendation.
 - Analyze existing samples from the Bight '03 survey and the Pac Baroness exploration and report/store results in a format and location that are compatible with future monitoring outputs.
 - Continue a monitoring program at popular Island anchorages beyond the current pilot phase, and adapt the monitoring protocol based on the results of this pilot project.
 - Formalize a partnership with the National Park Service to share visitor use data for the Islands on a regular basis.
 - Coordinate with other organizations to form an umbrella partnership that will fulfill the components of an anthropogenic marine debris research and monitoring program, including beach debris monitoring, a trawling study, boater surveys, pelagic plastics sampling study, and photo-documentation.
 - Develop research partnership to better understand the impact of stormwater plumes from Santa Clara and Ventura Rivers on Sanctuary water quality: Coordinate with researchers interested in this water quality issue (e.g. from the Santa Barbara Long Term Ecological Research project, Plumes and Blooms project, or Southern California Coastal Water Research Project) to facilitate implementation of a research project to sample storm water plumes, determine plume compositions, and better understand plume dynamics.
 - Continue to coordinate with the National Marine Sanctuaries Program to pilot an Automated Information System data stream interface and associated installation of a base station on Santa Cruz Island to track and log vessel traffic information to a public database.
 - Pursue opportunities to coordinate with research projects (identified in this report) on Island fog to incorporate sampling for diesel-specific air pollutants and facilitate predictive modeling of Sanctuary and Channel-wide chronic deposition.

Jurisdiction, Regulations and Policy Recommendations:

- Draft a single, unambiguous policy to eliminate untreated human waste discharges from near-shore National Park and Sanctuary users (e.g. kayakers, surfers, and hikers) that will be implemented with consistency throughout both jurisdictions.
- Consider policy options (identified in this recommendation) to specifically minimize and eliminate sewage discharges from small vessels.
- Participate in planning by the City of Santa Barbara and other stakeholders for cruise ship visits and get a clear picture of the City's objectives in terms of attracting and accommodating cruise ships to the SBC region. Additionally, make sure that the Sanctuary has a clear goal for policy towards cruise ships in the SBC (outside of Sanctuary waters) and that this policy is presented to the City of Santa Barbara, and review the Voluntary Agreement that ship captains sign before bringing tenders to the Santa Barbara Harbor.
- Consider establishing regulatory authority to protect against pollution that enters Sanctuary waters after being discharged into the ocean outside of CINMS boundaries (such as that maintained by Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary).
- Enhance cooperative relations with State and County agencies, and expanded participation and support for existing multi-agency initiatives.

- Establish a working group to the Advisory Council that focuses on water quality management for the Sanctuary.
- Through partnerships with representatives from other Sanctuaries subject to shipping impacts (such as Stellwagen Bank, Monterey Bay, and Olympic Coast), encourage federal decision makers to take advantage of existing policy opportunities to reduce pollution impacts from ships in SBC waters, and throughout the world ocean (e.g. Congressional ratification of Annexes IV and VI of the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships [MARPOL]).

Public Education and Outreach Recommendations:

- Articulate the interconnections between water, water pollution and the choices and actions of the region's community members. Convey this information to all communities, so that individuals are empowered to help protect and improve water quality from the mainland to the Islands.
 - CINMS should consider organizing a "Snapshot Day" modeled after that conducted annually by MBNMS, in order to build public awareness of—and sensitivity to—the Sanctuary, as well as to gather water quality data and build constructive partnerships with organizations and agencies.
 - The Sanctuary Education Team should incorporate Sanctuary water quality information and messages into its existing campaigns, and consider and plan a range of new outreach initiatives to foster public education on Channel and Sanctuary water quality. The SET should be involved in water quality action planning in order to help formalize its education and outreach initiatives as components of a CINMS water quality plan.
 - Sanctuary staff and stakeholders should help prepare talking points on Channel and Sanctuary water quality for the volunteer Naturalists, who also serve on the "front lines" of public education on Sanctuary water quality. The Naturalists should also coordinate these talking points with concessionaire vessel crews.
 - Develop and advertise (at their websites, visitor centers and the Islands) a specific, consistent and well-advertised human waste disposal policy, and make sure that visitors are enabled to follow the policy (bathrooms or alternative means of disposal are made available).
 - In the short term, offer assistance to harbors (that express an interest and have available resources) for developing new and more effective signs to inform boaters about water quality and clean boating practices.
 - Longer term, coordinate an ongoing program for boater education and outreach involving on-the-water and harbor-based training.
 - Coordinate with local agencies, harbors and other organizations to develop and post more effective signs in both English and Spanish — with messages that convey the connection between individuals' actions and impacts to Channel and Sanctuary water quality.
 - Look for opportunities to partner with other organizations (e.g. NOAA Weather Service and Santa Barbara Creeks Division) to develop public service announcements to encourage good trash management practices (particularly prior to storms).

Since receiving these recommendations in September 2005, CINMS has been working closely with Donna Meyers, the National Marine Sanctuary Program's (NMSP) West Coast Regional Water Quality Coordinator, on incorporating the Council's advice into an emerging framework and process plan for developing a CINMS water quality program. In early 2006 Donna will address the Council and share initial plans, then provide additional details in the spring and eventually look to the Council to assist in forming a special working group to help with planning.

Recommendations on Marine Reserves Monitoring

In March the Advisory Council unanimously adopted a series of recommendations received from its Research Activities Panel (RAP) working group concerning how to maintain and improve biological monitoring programs for marine protected areas (MPAs) within the CINMS. The recommendations were based on a detailed review of the 2004 Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas Monitoring Plan, which was developed by the California Department of Fish and Game. These recommendations were subsequently shared with the NMSP and other agencies and organizations involved in MPA monitoring activities at the Channel Islands. In ongoing efforts to coordinate various monitoring programs, pool resources, and

prioritize actions, the Sanctuary and partners draw on the Council/RAP advice and turn to them for additional assistance in planning and program reviews.

Recommendations on Sanctuary Aircraft

In March the Advisory Council approved a letter, which had been drafted by the RAP, encouraging the NMSP to retain the services of the Lake Renegade Seawolf aircraft stationed at CINMS. The letter was in response to reports that a removal from service of that NOAA aircraft might take place. The letter explained why the aircraft's services are vital to marine reserve/marine conservation area monitoring, Sanctuary surveillance and emergency response. Since receiving the letter, neither NOAA's Marine and Aviation Operations Center nor the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center have moved to recall the aircraft from CINMS. However, there has been no official response back to the Council regarding the future possibility of such a recall.

Resolution of Support for Collaborative Marine Research Program

At the March meeting, the Council adopted a resolution of support for the Collaborative Marine Research Program, a program funded through the Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary Foundation that brings together fishermen and scientists to collaborate on research projects within the CINMS (see www.cisanctuary.org/cmrap/index.htm). The Council resolution expressed support for collaborative research in general within CINMS, and specific support for the Collaborative Marine Research Program. The final resolution was provided to members of the Collaborative Marine Research Program steering committee as well as the Channel Islands Marine Sanctuary Foundation in hopes that it could be helpful in efforts to receive grants to support the program.

Comments on Marine Weather Buoys

In the first half of 2005 three marine weather buoys in the Santa Barbara Channel began to experience problems in reporting wind data. Because these buoys are very important to boaters and kayakers on the Advisory Council, members asked for more information on the problems and sought a way to help bring about solutions. At the July 22nd Advisory Council meeting, the Council agreed to voice their concerns to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator Vice Admiral Lautenbacher in a letter about the inoperative buoys. The letter also pointed out that the buoys were in need of long-term support from NOAA because buoy sponsorship funding from the Minerals Management Service (MMS) ceased in 2005.

In response to the Advisory Council, the Director of NOAA's National Data Buoy Center, Dr. Paul Moersdorf, attended the Advisory Council's September meeting and provided a presentation. His presentation provided an enlightening education about the network of buoys deployed around the nation's waters, and explained how buoy maintenance and replacement is funded. He assured the Council that he was doing all that he could to reprogram National Ocean Service funds in order to keep the three buoys of interest up and running, but that funds were short and long-term buoy sponsors (e.g., as MMS had been) had not yet come forward. The Advisory Council appreciated the responsiveness of the Director.

Comments on Preliminary Documentation for Phase 2 Marine Reserves/Conservation Areas Process

At the July 22nd Advisory Council meeting, the Council voted to send a letter to NOAA's Vice Admiral Lautenbacher expressing some concerns and a series of questions about the (then) pending NOAA decision on which statute(s) to utilize (National Marine Sanctuaries Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act) should a decision be made to extend the State of California network of marine reserves/conservation areas into the deeper federal waters of the CINMS. The letter was difficult for the Council to write, as efforts to craft a single view letter by consensus ran into difficulty when the majority of the Council felt the letter needed to be completed at the July meeting in order to be relevant while some members felt additional time was needed

in which to talk to constituents. With 16 of the Council's 21 voting seats participating, a motion to approve the letter resulted in a voting record of 9-yes, 4-no, 3-abstain. The difficult letter-writing experience gave way to the Council refining a set of existing decision-making protocols at their November meeting (see below).

A simple response letter from Vice Admiral Lautenbacher to the Advisory Council Chair offered thanks for the input, the hard work of the Council, and assured that NOAA would consider the Council's comments before making a decision. The NOAA decision then followed in October 2005 and the Sanctuary Manager explained it at the November Council meeting (see November meeting notes here: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>). In essence, the NOAA decision held that if marine reserves are to be established within federal waters of the CINMS, NOAA prefers use of the Magnuson-Stevens Act for closing bottom gear fishing via a currently pending final rule on Essential Fish Habitat designations for bottomfish along with use of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act for other closures necessary to create no-take marine reserves.

Council Resolution on Oil and Gas Exploration

At the November 18th meeting, the Advisory Council adopted the following brief resolution:

"In light of the recent passage of our nation's Energy Policy Act, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council would like to reaffirm with the Sanctuary manager and NOAA Administrator our support of the existing prohibition on oil and gas activities within the Sanctuary. Additionally we would like the manager to know that we remain very concerned about activities of any kind outside the Sanctuary's boundaries that could have an adverse effect on the resources of the Sanctuary."

The action was prompted by a similar resolution adopted by the Advisory Council to the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. In considering this action, much discussion focused on establishing that this was essentially a reaffirmation of both existing Sanctuary regulations and the Council's usual concern with and need to be vigilant about any potential threats to CINMS resources. A roll call vote was taken, with these results: 14 yes, 3 abstain, 1 no. The Advisory Council Chair communicated the resolution to Sanctuary Manager Chris Mobley via letter, and Chris Mobley forwarded it to the Director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program.

Sanctuary Response to Council Recommendations on Marine Acoustics

In September 2004 the Advisory Council adopted a comprehensive report, "Anthropogenic Noise and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary" (available here: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/pdf/7-12-04.pdf>) that included a wide range of recommendations for addressing research needs, policy options and partnerships addressing the issue of noise impacts on Sanctuary marine life. In May 2005, the Sanctuary Manager reported back to the Advisory Council on the status of work done to implement some of the Council's recommendations and described his future plans to continue working on this issue. A summary of the response to the Advisory Council follows:

- Regarding the need for ambient acoustic monitoring within CINMS:
 - Consultations have progressed with Dr. John Hildebrand of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography regarding the modification of an existing southern California marine mammal acoustic monitoring project so that it might also record sounds within the CINMS.
 - Initial discussions have begun that are focused on combining Hildebrand's ambient noise monitoring with the Sanctuary Aerial Monitoring and Spatial Analysis Program as well as with new Automated Information System (AIS) vessel tracking in the Santa Barbara Channel.
 - Staff are also learning from the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary's acoustic monitoring being conducted by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and will seek to collaborate.
- Regarding the need to study hearing capabilities of Sanctuary wildlife:
 - Within NOAA this type of research is best led by experts from the NOAA Fisheries Ocean Acoustics Program.

- CINMS plans to develop a list of Sanctuary species and their known hearing ranges from which to build a risk assessment.
- Regarding the need to study anthropogenic noise impacts on Sanctuary ecology and need for research on indirect anthropogenic noise impacts to Sanctuary ecology:
 - This will require a step-wise build out and will be developed after initiating monitoring and understanding hearing capabilities of Sanctuary species.
 - The NMSP will learn from studies underway at Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (long-term correlations between noise environment and sanctuary ecology)
- Regarding the establishment of a vessel traffic-monitoring program:
 - The Automated Information System (AIS) project can provide this data
 - CINMS will look into possible calibration of Hildebrand data with AIS data
- Regarding the need to develop partnerships:
 - Initial discussions about partnerships are underway with Scripps Institute of Oceanography and NOAA Fisheries Ocean Acoustics Program
 - CINMS also plans to talk with representatives of the Marine Mammal Commission and other potential partners (e.g., Navy, others).
- Regarding the need to engage the shipping industry:
 - Initial contact made with Cathy Metcalf, Chamber of Shipping of America, and a possible future presentation may be made to the Advisory Council.
 - CINMS would like to understand what voluntary best management practices or initiatives the shipping industry is already engaged in.
- Regarding researching international policy and regulatory tools:
 - CINMS has helped a UCLA Graduate Student and Sanctuary Intern Angela Haren with a graduate paper on this topic, which was later presented to the Council.
- Regarding the creation of a role for the SAC's Research Activities Panel (RAP):
 - The RAP could consider this after receiving presentation(s) on the issue.
 - Other existing scientific bodies should also be considered (e.g., Marine Mammal Commission).

As a follow-up to this response, in July the Advisory Council received an in-depth presentation from Dr. John Hildebrand, a bioacoustics researcher from Scripps Institute of Oceanography, about the basics of marine acoustics and his own research on this subject. Dr. Hildebrand described his current Navy-funded project to place acoustic recording packages at certain stations in the Santa Barbara Channel for year-round acoustic monitoring, and explained how this project could be coordinated with vessel tracking Automated Identification System (AIS) data and Sanctuary aerial monitoring data for Sanctuary and other purposes. In addition, Helene Scalliet with the NMSP provided the Council with a presentation explaining the current status of marine acoustic work across the Program.

Educational Topics and Other Issues Considered but Not Resulting in Recommendations

In addition to the Council actions described above, several topics were explored in 2005 through a series of presentations, discussions, and/or focused efforts by working groups. Some of these issues were requested by or brought to the Council for informational purposes only, while for other issues the Council discussions have either not yet progressed beyond information gathering stages or have otherwise not yet resulted in recommendations. These issues and topics included the following:

- In February 2005, former Advisory Council Vice Chair Jim Brye traveled to San Francisco and Olema, CA along with Sanctuary staff (Mike Murray and Jacklyn Kelly) to participate in the annual meeting of SAC Chairs and Coordinators. The CINMS Advisory Council case study presented by Jim Brye was about marine acoustics (noise) and the work and recommendations put forth by the Council in 2004.
- In March, the Advisory Council took part in co-hosting a 300-person public educational forum on liquefied natural gas (LNG) and local offshore terminal development proposals adjacent to CINMS. The Sanctuary and the League of Women Voters of Ventura County co-sponsored the event, which was held in Oxnard, California on March 1st. Representatives of BHP Billiton, U.S. Coast Guard,

California State Lands Commission, Environmental Defense Center, and Border Power Plant Working Group provided presentations, followed by a question and answer session. A full report is available here: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/news.html>.

- Fishing Education Series. In an effort to teach Council members more about fisheries active within CINMS, commercial fishing representative Jim Marshall provided the Council with two presentations: one in March on urchin fishing and another in July on the abalone fishery. Jim's presentations were very interesting, incorporating video, slides, story-telling, and research and monitoring results. Jim plans to bring in other fishermen to provide similar talks to the Council.
- In May the Advisory Council received a presentation from NOAA's National Centers for Coastal and Ocean Sciences on the final findings of a multi-year biogeographic assessment of marine resources within and surrounding the CINMS. The presentation is available here: http://ccma.nos.noaa.gov/ecosystems/sanctuaries/chanisl_nms.html. This study was conducted to provide analyses of Sanctuary boundary expansion options that will be considered in a future environmental review public process.
- Also in May Dr. Steve Gaines, Director of the Marine Science Institute at the University of California Santa Barbara, gave a presentation to the Advisory Council on plans for and progress on construction of an on-campus building that would provide CINMS office space and a marine education center.
- In May and November, the Advisory Council heard from Chris LaFranchi, CINMS Social Science Coordinator, about ongoing work to develop a prioritized plan to implement additional marine reserve socioeconomic monitoring programs within CINMS.
- Periodic informational updates from the U.S. Coast Guard, California Department of Fish and Game, National Park Service and other Sanctuary partners were provided on the status of monitoring programs and enforcement services for existing marine reserves and conservation areas within CINMS;
- Informational updates on development of a program by the Sanctuary Education Team (a Council working group) aimed at providing speaker training to others (including Advisory Council members) that could assist in providing presentations about the CINMS.
- In November, Greg Sanders, Sea Otter Recovery Coordinator with the Ventura office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, provided the Council an informational presentation about the 2005 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Translocation of Southern Sea Otters. The Council learned about the history of the translocation program and how the Fish and Wildlife service came to their proposed action of officially deeming the program a failure, doing away with the zonal management of sea otters, and letting the otters move around on their own. This was an informational item for the Council; the SAC was not seeking to take a group action.
- Throughout 2005 the Council also received regular updates on the management plan revision process, which was characterized by staff work to finalize suggested edits to draft documents and waiting for the completion of the agency clearance process. In September staff provided a detailed preview of the draft management plan and draft environmental impact statement. The Council awaits their next opportunity to provide recommendations on the draft management plan in 2006.

Also in 2005, the Advisory Council enjoyed an optional one-day field trip to Anacapa Island on January 29 and a three-day retreat to Santa Cruz Island on October 26-28. Additionally, in August four members of the Advisory Council attended a meeting of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council in Cambria. During the joint session, Council members discussed shared experiences with the management plan revision process and explored ideas for possible future Advisory Council collaborations.

Major Administrative Changes

Membership

Several important administrative changes were made in 2005. Ten new and/or reappointed non-governmental representatives joined the Council throughout the year (Commercial Fishing member and

alternate, Non-consumptive recreation member and alternate, Business member and alternate, Public-at large member and alternate, Research alternate and Conservation member). Also, seven new government seat representatives joined the Council (NOAA Fisheries alternate, California Resources Agency alternate, California Department of Fish and Game alternate, Minerals Management Service alternate, US Coast Guard member, Santa Barbara County alternate, Department of Defense member). At the close of 2005, six positions on the Sanctuary Advisory Council (Education member and alternate, Tourism alternate, Chumash alternate, Recreational fishing member and alternate) opened up as representatives were reaching the end of their terms; these seats will be filled in early 2006.

Advisory Council elections were held in early 2005 resulting in the filling of the following officer positions: Dianne Meester (Chair), Linda Krop (Vice Chair), and Eric Kett (Secretary).

Working Groups

Several Working Groups of the Advisory Council were active in 2005. In the summer the Chumash Community seat representatives held a successful awareness-building field trip to the Channel Islands for a group of 27, followed by a Working Group orientation session meeting in the fall. The RAP met once in person and once via email sessions and, as previously mentioned, produced a set of recommendations for marine reserve/conservation area monitoring, and wrote a letter that the Advisory Council adopted in support of retaining the Sanctuary's aircraft. The Conservation Working Group had a very productive year, meeting several times and producing an extensive report and set of recommendations on water quality that was adopted by the Advisory Council (as previously mentioned). This work was made possible in large part by the Conservation Working Group's enlisting of two highly motivated individuals: Shiva Polefka and Sara Polgar. The Sanctuary Education Team (SET) spent some time in 2005 recruiting new members and seeking a new, inspirational direction for their work together. As the year closed, the SET had successfully developed two educational presentations about the Sanctuary and had held two training workshops designed to teach others how to effectively provide these presentations to outside audiences. Both the recreational and commercial fishing working groups did not hold in-person public meetings in 2005, but the respective Council representatives actively kept in contact with working group members and often reported to the Council on their constituents' views, questions and concerns.

Still maintaining an "inactive" status (meaning the group is not officially disbanded but is not currently holding meetings) are the Business Working Group, the Military Activities Working Group, and the Ports and Harbors Working Group.

Protocols

Problems experienced with a letter-writing process at the July Advisory Council meeting led the Council to discuss and develop ways to improve their protocols for such matters (decision making protocols are available at: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/charter.html>). At the November meeting the Council approved refinement of their existing decision-making protocols in a number of ways, including the following:

- For significant policy issues, non-binding "straw polls" should be taken early on to get a sense for where members are at;
- When negotiating by consensus on a proposed Council letter, use a deliberative process with those members not comfortable with a proposed action or letter to find out what would be necessary to make them comfortable;
- Set a time limit, maybe a week or two, to have a draft proposed letter circulated in advance of meeting;
- Determine if a decision must be made at a given Council meeting;
- At a meeting when members request changes to a proposed letter, and those changes are agreed to by the Council, then in any final vote on the proposed letter those members should vote first;
- When appropriate, establish a letter drafting subcommittee that is representative of varying viewpoints on the issue at hand to make sure a balance of perspectives is incorporated into the draft.