



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

AUG 6 2001

Ms. Stephanie Harlan
Chair
Monterey Bay National Marine
Sanctuary Advisory Council
299 Foam Street
Monterey, California 93940

Dear Chair Harlan:

Thank you for your letter to Scott B. Gudes, Acting Under Secretary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), regarding the Sanctuary Advisory Council's (SAC) support for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's (MBNMS) Multicultural Education Program, also known as Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO). Your letter was referred to the National Ocean Service (NOS) for a response.

NOAA appreciates the high-level of participation of the SAC members during the development and review process of the MERITO Plan. In my experience, the most successful ocean and coastal management initiatives are developed by working closely with community partners. The MERITO plan seems to accomplish that goal through well-defined projects with regional partners that engage individuals from underrepresented communities. I understand that on a recent visit to MBNMS, Mr. Gudes expressed enthusiasm about the ideas and strategies detailed in MERITO, and mentioned NOAA's Educational Partnership Program with the Minority Serving Institution initiative as a possible funding source. Subject to appropriations, NOS will work with the Sanctuary Program to support MERITO during the next fiscal year.

We appreciate the MBNMS SAC's support in this worthwhile and innovative initiative.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Davidson
Acting Assistant Administrator



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