

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Leads colleagues in calling on Governor Evers to implement state-run review of Lake Michigan National Marine Sanctuary

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**WASHINGTON** — On Thursday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) led his colleagues Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) and Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.) in sending a letter to Governor Tony Evers urging him to further protect the interests of the state and local governments and affected private citizens by including language in a yet-to-be-signed memorandum of agreement between the state of Wisconsin and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that allows for a state-run review of the management plan of the new-~~new~~ soon-to-be designated Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary every five years and a process for a re-proposal of the designation in the event the presence and terms of the sanctuary caused negative impacts for the Lake Michigan coastal communities.

*“The designation of the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary can increase tourism and economic activity in the lakeshore communities bordering the sanctuary and will help ensure the continued protection of the many shipwrecks within the sanctuary boundaries,” **they wrote.** “While we believe the sanctuary can be a successful addition to Wisconsin’s ecotourism, we also believe its lasting success largely depends on the terms of the management plan.”*

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below.

July 1, 2021

Governor Tony Evers

115 East, State Capitol

Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers,

We write regarding the management plan for the *Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary*. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently published the final rule for the designation for the sanctuary, and it will be established after the 45-day period of continuous session of Congress. We believe it is imperative that you include language in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with NOAA to ensure the sanctuary is a positive addition to our Lake Michigan coastal communities.

The designation of the *Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary* can increase tourism and economic activity in the lakeshore communities bordering the sanctuary and will help ensure the continued protection of the many shipwrecks within the sanctuary boundaries. We have heard from many constituents who support the potential sanctuary, but we have also heard from many constituents who oppose or have concerns with the designation. Individuals expressed concerns to our office that the sanctuary designation could hinder lake access for shoreline property owners and other property rights, recreational access, commercial and private fishing rights, and potential mineral rights. While we believe the sanctuary can be a successful addition to Wisconsin's ecotourism, we also believe its lasting success largely depends on the terms of the management plan.

As you finalize a MOA for the *Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary*, we urge you to include language for a state-run review of the management plan of the sanctuary every five years. We also ask that you ensure the MOA includes definitive language to allow a re-proposal of the sanctuary in the event the management advisory council, governor, or local residents determine the presence and terms of the sanctuary caused negative impacts for the Lake Michigan coastal communities.

The States of Michigan, Maryland, and Florida all included state-run review and re-proposal language in their MOAs with NOAA for their National Marine Sanctuaries. We believe the language included in the MOA for the *Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary* in Michigan best encompasses the concerns and needs for the potential *Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary*. On behalf of our

shared constituents, thank you for your consideration and attention to our request. Please provide us a copy of the MOA with NOAA for the *Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary* as soon as it is finalized.

Respectfully,

Ron Johnson

U.S. Senator

Glenn Grothman

U.S. Representative

Mike Gallagher

U.S. Representative