



**SOCIETY *for*
HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY**

J.W. (Joe) Joseph, PhD, RPA

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Mr. David Alberg
Sanctuary Superintendent
100 Museum Drive
Newport News, VA 23606

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Mr. Alberg,

The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) would like to offer the following comments in support of the proposed boundary expansion of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary (MNMS). Formed in 1967, the Society for Historical Archaeology is the largest scholarly group concerned with the archaeology of the modern world (A.D. 1400-present). SHA promotes scholarly research and the dissemination of knowledge concerning historical archaeology. The society is specifically concerned with the identification, excavation, interpretation, conservation, and promotion of sites and materials on land and underwater.

Shipwrecks and cultural landscapes represent unique, non-renewable resources that tangibly connect us to our collective heritage. The most immediate benefit of the proposed boundary expansion would be the ability to legally protect historically significant resources that are not included in current legislation; historic shipwrecks in the United States are not offered universal protection under federal law. One of the few mechanisms for protecting some historic vessels is through application of the Sunken Military Craft Act (2005). Based on the current models for expansion, inclusion within the proposed MNMS boundaries would not supersede or otherwise contradict existing legislation for military vessels and would provide needed protection for non-military wrecks.

Current Sanctuary activities include public outreach and education efforts targeted towards historic shipwrecks that would become part of the MNMS under the proposed expansion models (<http://monitor.noaa.gov/publications/>). It is therefore unlikely that expansion of the Sanctuary's boundaries would negatively impact the *Monitor*. The MNMS staff has already demonstrated their willingness and ability to address a wide range of public resources and audiences.

The proposed boundary expansion of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary will provide critical legal protection for historic resources, and create greater awareness for this unique cultural landscape. Consistent with their responsibilities to the National Historic Preservation Act (1967) and National Environmental Policy Act (1969), MNMS will work to preserve and promote responsible access to our national heritage.

Sincerely,

SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.W. Joseph', written in a cursive style.

J.W. Joseph, PhD, RPA, President