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February 27, 2018

Mr. Benjamin Friedman
Acting NOAA Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Administrator Friedman:

On behalf of the State of Wisconsin, I am rescinding the nomination for the Lake Michigan – Wisconsin National Marine Sanctuary (NMS). As you know, last September we sent a letter outlining questions and concerns that citizens and elected officials raised regarding the NMS. Though we appreciate NOAA’s reply, we feel these concerns persist given this additional information.

Wisconsin has a strong history of protecting our shipwrecks. Under 1991 Wisconsin Act 269, the State of Wisconsin Historical Society is charged with protecting our submerged cultural resources. Moreover, Wisconsin’s shipwrecks have also been covered under federal law by National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987.

One of the hallmarks of my administration has been to reduce the regulatory burden on the citizens of the State of Wisconsin. We believe this designation would create further unnecessary bureaucratic red tape. The addition of another level of federal bureaucracy will not materially advance our shared commitment to protecting shipwrecks. In fact, the NOAA designation would not bring any additional resources to protect the shipwrecks, (“[s]ince NOAA does not have enforcement officers in the Great Lakes, NOAA would work with State partners to explore options for assistance in the enforcement of sanctuary regulations.”)

The addition of a new level of government for citizens to petition for permits and certifications for normal use of Lake Michigan is too much of a tradeoff for the negligible benefit to protecting shipwrecks. Wisconsin has and will continue to protect our submerged cultural resources.

Sincerely,

Scott Walker
Governor