Sanctuary Advisory Council
Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

FINAL RESOLUTION
5/25/16

Resolution of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council on the Pending Preparation by NOAA of an Environmental Assessment on Certain Proposed Coast Guard Discharges within GFNMS Sanctuary Waters

Whereas, NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has requested public comment on the scope of issues to be considered in an Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluating the potential discharge of sewage, ammunition, and flare debris from certain U.S Coast Guard (USCG) vessels operating within the expanded geographic boundaries of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS), as noticed in the Federal Register pursuant to NOAA-NOS-2016-0043, and this is deemed a relevant topic of concern by the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (GFSAC); and

Whereas, the USCG is a valued partner with GFNMS for monitoring, oversight, search and rescue, emergency spill response, and enforcement of certain existing regulations within the GFNMS; and

Whereas, it is the understanding of the GFSAC that this proposal for anticipated discharge activities of the very limited number of subject USCG
vessels being contemplated in the NOAA EA now in preparation can be accommodated by the issuance by NOAA of a site-specific general permit or regulation delineating only the particular necessary activities by specific vessels, and in so doing to carefully preclude any unwarranted and unintentional broader precedents that might otherwise be misconstrued to imply the right to conduct similar USCG activities within other National Marine Sanctuary sites, while ensuring that no other agency or private or commercial entity derives any similar implied benefits from the site-specific NOAA general permit or regulation applying only to USCG operations within GFNMS; and

Whereas, the EA now being prepared by NOAA should also consider the following, but not limited to:

- The use of geospatial zoning with relation to biological, recreational and cultural resources and discharge transport/mixing;
- Adaptive management;
- Best practices for any USCG activities allowable under such NOAA general permit or regulation to ensure full protection of sensitive GFNMS biological (marine, avian, and benthic), recreational and cultural resources;
- Impacts to marine protected areas;
- Coast Guard operational considerations and needs, with differentiation between emergency and non-emergency operations; and
- Fates and effects of materials discharged, and an estimated range of quantities and timing of materials discharged (including acoustic impacts).

Therefore be it resolved, that the GFSAC hereby adopts this resolution of comment on NOAA-NOS-2016-0043; and

Further be it resolved, that the GFSAC requests that the GFNMS Superintendent duly submit this resolution of comment in timely response to the aforementioned Federal Register notice on NOAA-NOS-2016-0043 and to also forward a copy of this resolution to the Acting Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and to other relevant officials as deemed appropriate by the GFNMS Superintendent.