

Letter to the Editor

Dear MPA News:

As former manager of three US National Marine Sanctuaries (Key Largo, USS Monitor and Channel Islands), I would like to offer the following perspective to the MPA definition discussion that has been proceeding in the "Letters from Readers" ([MPA News 3:7, 3:8](#)).

Briefly, unless we have control over pollutants coming in from the land, air and external currents, we are trying to manage the proverbial "submarine with three screen doors". We might have success on the land side, but the air and current sides are often international (as well as large-scale national) problems, and not easily mitigated.

If MPAs aren't really protected from the three screen doors, then we shouldn't be calling them "marine protected areas" or "fully-protected areas" or any other form of "protected" area.

In this day and age with all the built-in stresses imposed on our sacred marine areas, an area is not magically or instantaneously protected via an MPA designation. Protection must be continually fought for - and it may never be attained.

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