



The Society for Marine Mammalogy

<http://www.marinemammalogy.org>

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May 24, 2026

Dra. Claudia Scheinbaum Pardo,
Presidenta, Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Dear Madam President,

On behalf of the Society of Marine Mammalogy, I write to express my concern regarding the decree of 10 April 2026 aiming to reclassify the Port of Loreto (Baja California Sur) as a deep-sea and cabotage port. We are extremely pleased that the decree has been suspended.

The Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM), founded in 1981, is a non-profit international organization with the mission of promoting the global advancement of marine mammal science and contributing to its relevance and impact on education, conservation, and management. The SMM comprises of more than 2,000 members from 56 countries, including Mexico, and includes many of the world's leading experts on marine mammals. The Society's primary goal is to advance understanding of and promote conservation of marine mammals and their ecosystems.

Loreto Bay is of unique ecological importance globally. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, a National Park (Parque Nacional Bahía de Loreto), an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA), and a PACE Priority Site, and is designated under Mexico's own Species Conservation Action Programs (Programas de Acción para la Conservación de Especies) as a priority site for blue whale conservation. Loreto Bay is a seasonal aggregation and feeding area for blue whales, including mothers with calves, and it supports essential life-cycle functions for other marine mammal species. This is a matter of great importance to the SMM.

The anticipated increase in maritime traffic associated with Loreto's reclassification raises well-documented risks, including vessel strikes in areas of whale aggregation; chronic underwater noise disrupting whale communication, navigation, and foraging; habitat degradation across feeding, breeding, and migratory habitat; pollution from discharges, spills, and dredging; broader ecosystem impacts on prey and trophic dynamics; and socio-ecological effects on small-scale fisheries and nature-based tourism.



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We also note concerns from multiple stakeholders regarding the apparent absence of a comprehensive environmental impact assessment, cumulative effects analysis, and inclusive public consultation prior to the decree. Given the ecological sensitivity and international importance of the area, such processes are essential to informed and transparent decision-making.

Our intent is not to oppose development, but to ensure that development is compatible with the conservation of globally significant marine habitats and responsive of local community opinion and needs. The Gulf of California remains one of the few regions in the world with relatively high ecological integrity, and decisions made now may have lasting, potentially irreversible consequences.

While we are relieved with the current suspension of the decree, we respectfully encourage the Government of Mexico to undertake an independent, science-based environmental and strategic assessment; consider cumulative impacts at the regional scale; ensure transparent and inclusive public engagement; explore mitigation measures such as vessel routing, speed restrictions, seasonal protections, and monitoring; and align decisions with national and international biodiversity commitments.

The Society stands ready to provide scientific input and facilitate dialogue with the international scientific community, should this be helpful.

Respectfully,

Dr. Jeremy J. Kiszka

President

Society for Marine Mammalogy

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