Dear Friends,

Over its nearly 50 years, the New England Aquarium has served as a catalyst for global change through public engagement, commitment to marine animal conservation, leadership in education, innovative scientific research, and effective advocacy for vital and vibrant oceans. Your partnership in this mission has been essential, and we sincerely thank you for your contributions to our successes. Our community of donors and supporters has put the Aquarium in the position to redefine what an aquarium can be in the 21st century.

In 2016, the Aquarium focused on three key areas to further its mission: the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium, The Blueway, and Exhibit Master Planning. The results have been extraordinary.

On World Oceans Day 2016, the Aquarium launched its new research and conservation institute, the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium. Founded in part due to the generous support of longtime Aquarium supporters Linda Cabot and Ed Anderson, the institute is focused on expanding the Aquarium’s cutting-edge applied marine research and data-driven conservation solutions to mitigate human impacts on our oceans.

As an international convening power, the Anderson Cabot Center achieved several successes in its first year alone. Chief among them was the designation by President Barack Obama of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. The president’s decision was based in part on decades worth of data collected by Anderson Cabot Center researchers. And within days of its launch, the Anderson Cabot Center received recognition from the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs, among other notable achievements.

Then in September came the announcement of The Blueway, a major part of the Aquarium’s ambitious master plan to reinvigorate Central Wharf. As envisioned, The Blueway will create a public promenade that extends from The Rose Kennedy Greenway to the water’s edge at the far end of Central Wharf. Thanks to the efforts of then-President Dr. Nigella Hillgarth and her colleagues, the reimagined Downtown Waterfront District represents an inspired vision of the Aquarium’s stewardship in a time of climate change, benefitting all. We so appreciate Nigella’s inspired vision of the Aquarium’s stewardship in a time of climate change, benefitting all. We so appreciate Nigella’s leadership on this and many other Aquarium endeavors, and wish her the very best as she returns to academia.

Of course, the Aquarium’s stewardship extends beyond the physical resources of our oceans. We are fortunate to have a stellar team of staff, volunteers, and partners who seek to educate and engage nearly 1.4 million visitors on ocean conservation. The public’s desire to learn more about aquatic ecosystems and the diverse life they contain is best demonstrated by the overwhelming success of the Aquarium’s 2016 debut of the Olympic Coast Exhibit.

Building on that success, the Aquarium team spent much of 2016 planning its latest exhibit, Science of Sharks, which debuted in April 2017 to much acclaim. An innovative new exhibit for the Aquarium, combining multimedia features and illustrating the enormous contributions made by researchers at the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life to scientific literature and solutions. It’s an exciting time to be a part of the New England Aquarium. As interim President and Chair of the Board of Trustees, we are grateful to everyone who contributed to an impressive 2016.

And we are deeply appreciative of our donors, members, and partners. By supporting the Aquarium, you become part of its core, part of its stewardship of the blue planet. We couldn’t do it without you. We look forward to your continued support as we expand our global advocacy for vital and vibrant oceans.
In 2016, the Aquarium sought to expand that commitment even further with a vision for the future: The Blueway.

Collectively, the public has spent tens of billions of dollars cleaning Boston Harbor and submerging the Central Artery, which served as a barrier between the city and waterfront. In an effort to ensure that the many enriching benefits of those efforts are accessible to all and the future of the harbor in the era of climate change and sea level rise is protected, we have reimagined the public space at Central Wharf.

The Aquarium’s master plan calls for a public promenade that will feature broad sightlines from The Rose Kennedy Greenway to the water’s edge at the far end of Central Wharf. The Blueway offers a cohesive plan to expand the public’s access to the Boston waterfront, further bring the Aquarium’s mission out into the public realm through transformative outdoor exhibits, and serve as a model for strategic planning on the harbor. In keeping with our mission, it’s not only educational and environmentally friendly, it’s accessible to all.

The response was overwhelming. The Boston Globe editorial board called it “…a pragmatic vision to create a compelling public space…” This and other stakeholder responses highlighted the Aquarium’s strategy and ability to build consensus.

While there is much work to be done, our vision for the Aquarium and downtown waterfront is helping to shape crucial discussions with both the city and state as the Municipal Harbor planning process moves forward. This is a long-term project, a bold vision for the future we hope to use as a regional, national, and even international model for creative waterfront planning in an age of climate change. By reimagining the public space at Central Wharf, the Aquarium seeks to highlight the importance of Boston Harbor as an intrinsic economic, cultural, and environmental resource.

As Boston’s only cultural institution with a focus on the environment, the Aquarium remains committed to its stewardship of both the blue planet and the city it calls home.

For nearly 50 years, the Aquarium has taken seriously its mission to be a catalyst for global change through public engagement, commitment to marine animal conservation, leadership in education, innovative scientific research, and effective advocacy for vital and vibrant oceans.

During its time on Central Wharf, the Aquarium has fulfilled these goals in significant ways. There were several massive expansions, including the Animal Care Center in Quincy, where a record 733 rescued cold-stunned sea turtles were rehabilitated in 2014. There were international conservation victories, including the 2008 designation of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, the largest contiguous marine protected area in its time. And since 2010, the Aquarium has taken a leadership role in engaging the public in one of the world’s most important scientific issues, climate change, through the National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation. By all accounts, it’s been and continues to be a crucial success for the blue planet.

But the Aquarium’s mission is more than a set of goals. It’s a promise made. A promise delivered. And in 2016, a promise exceeded. No year has been as pivotal to the legacy and future of the New England Aquarium as 2016. It saw the culmination of the Aquarium’s master planning achievements begin to take shape in profound ways and be implemented across each spectrum of our mission. Through the generous support of valued donors and the extraordinary efforts of an extraordinary staff, the New England Aquarium has cemented its place as a strategic, global catalyst for ocean conservation well into the 21st century.

2016

A Pivotal Year in Review
Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium

While the Aquarium has long had robust research and conservation departments, they tended to operate independently. In 2016, we set out to change that. On World Oceans Day 2016, the Aquarium launched the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium. It combines cutting-edge marine research with the Aquarium’s convening power as an internationally recognized institution to create solutions to human impacts on our oceans. Framed on the Aquarium’s iconic foundation, the Anderson Cabot Center will continue to build collaborations among a range of stakeholders, including scientists, policymakers, engineers, fishers, conservation advocates, and the seafood industry to research and advocate for our oceans.

In its first year, the Anderson Cabot Center celebrated a host of notable accomplishments. Soon after its June 2016 launch, Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton awarded the Anderson Cabot Center a significant grant to further its research on whale-friendly rope. This reduced-strength rope is modified to break when whales become entangled—an important research project as entanglement is a leading cause of death among the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale.

The institute celebrated another ocean victory in September when President Barack Obama formally designated the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts a national monument using decades of data collected by Anderson Cabot Center scientists. Located about 150 miles off the coast of Cape Cod, the nearly 5,000 square feet of underwater canyons and seamounts is home to deep-sea corals and provides a multitude of essential ecosystems to marine flora and fauna. We are proud to have been a part of helping to create the first East Coast monument and refuge for ocean life.

Looking forward, Anderson Cabot Center scientists will focus on three areas:

**Marine Animal and Ecosystem Health:** Increase marine animal and ecosystem vitality by reducing human impacts on oceans in a changing climate

**Marine Conservation Leadership Program:** Prepare, empower, and convene a global network of conservation leaders

**Fisheries Resilience** Reduce unintended mortality of marine mammals and fishes, and effects on environments caused by fishing practices

Doing so will help mitigate human impacts on our oceans in a time of climate change. Part of this requires that structures be identified and in place to measure the outcomes of all research and advocacy that emerges from the Anderson Cabot Center.

With nearly 40 staff members, including Nick Whitney, Ph.D., a recent addition to the shark research team who came onboard last fall, the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life can claim multiple victories in its first year as it builds on the stellar reputation of the Aquarium and expands its global research and conservation reach well into the 21st century.

Of course, these environmental achievements would not have been possible without the sustained support of our donors. We are particularly grateful to Linda Cabot and Ed Anderson, for whom the Anderson Cabot Center is named, for their significant contribution to launching this vital new effort to advocate for even more effective ocean conservation.

As exciting as our regional and international advocacy is, the heart of the Aquarium resides at Central Wharf. The Aquarium’s commitment to its visitors has never been stronger.

In 2016, the Aquarium revitalized its Olympic Coast Exhibit to span three colossal tanks with two giant Pacific octopus and a plethora of tidepool invertebrates, including a blossom of anemones, magical sea stars, and the Pacific spiny lumpsucker. The goal of the exhibit, generously supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, the Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund, and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, was to highlight the importance of habitat protection afforded by the National Marine Sanctuary System, including New England’s own Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.

Mission accomplished.

The combination of the new exhibit and the wildly popular theme program, *Tentacles Take Hold*, helped the Aquarium enjoy one of its most successful years on record. Attendance reached nearly 1.4 million, and the Aquarium surpassed its revenue projections for the year. Visitor feedback was uniformly enthusiastic—always the overarching goal.

Coming off such a successful year at the gate, staff aimed to exceed expectations for 2017. And the debut of the *Science of Sharks* exhibit, which opened in April 2017, proved that old adage *success breeds success*. It was met with positive media coverage and high attendance numbers during its member-exclusive opening. With an innovative design and interactive displays highlighting the diversity and quirky biology of sharks, this new exhibit is resonating with audiences: sharks are animals that should inspire awe, not fear.

As Aquarium staff members embark on a comprehensive assessment of exhibit space, the needs and interests of technologically-savvy audiences in mind, expect future exhibits to continue to engage, educate, and entertain in creative ways.

The year 2016 proved to be pivotal for the future of the New England Aquarium, largely because it held a tenant nurtured throughout its nearly 50-year history: stewardship. At its core, the Aquarium’s mission always has and always will adhere to the belief that responsible management of the oceans and all they sustain is its most important duty. Everyone affiliated with the Aquarium has proven to have this deep and abiding commitment. By supporting the viability and integrity of the Aquarium, donors, members, and visitors are supporting the Aquarium’s mission to be effective advocates for vital and vibrant oceans.
Thank you for your support!

This publication lists all donors of $500 or more during the fiscal year (January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016). To learn more about the Aquarium’s giving programs, please email the Development Office at giving@neaq.org or call 617-226-2622.

GREAT BENEFICIARIES
The following donors have committed $1 million or more cumulatively, since the New England Aquarium’s opening in 1969.

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2016 INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL GIFTS
The following individuals provided unrestricted operating gifts to the Aquarium in 2016, as members of the President’s Circle and Navigator and Conservation Societies.

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Ms. Debbie Pepper

A long-time supporter of the Aquarium, the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation’s multi-year funding has helped catalyze the Anderson Cabot Center, which applies cutting-edge marine research, data-driven conservation solutions, and public engagement to ensure a future for the oceans in which resources are used sustainably, critical species and habitats are protected, and ecosystems are managed wisely.

Through its generosity, the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation has amplified the Aquarium’s proven efforts to strengthen the health of our oceans and will enable the Anderson Cabot Center to find and implement innovative, scalable solutions to specific challenges that affect marine species in the Gulf of Maine and other at-risk locations around the world.

Photo: Brian Skerry
The Aquarium is excited to welcome longtime supporter Michael J. Bohnen, Esq. to the Board of Trustees in 2017. Michael Bohnen has a long history of support for the New England Aquarium and has been a key figure in the development and growth of the institution. His commitment to conservation and education aligns perfectly with the Aquarium's mission to promote understanding and appreciation of the ocean.

Congratulations to Michael for his dedication and leadership. We are honored to have him as part of our Board of Trustees.
Charter Members

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our 114 Charter Members who have been with the Aquarium since our earliest days on Central Wharf. In 1968, we began building a base of membership support and an Aquarium that would ultimately open its doors to the public for another year. Almost 50 years later, we are fortunate to still have their loyal support. Thank you, Charter Members.

INDIVIDUAL, FOUNDATION, AND CORPORATE GIFTS AND GRANTS

The following donors, members, and sponsors contributed to the Aquarium in excess of $500 or more in 2016. This includes restricted gifts from individuals, corporate sponsors, partners, members foundation, and government grants and contracts.

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The Lowell Institute

$10 – $24
Anonymous
The Lowell Institute

$5 – $9
Anonymous
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$2 – $4
Anonymous
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Thank you to the Dwyer family!

Matt and Meg Dwyer have a decades-long connection to the Aquarium that stems from a deep love of the oceans. The longtime members’ visits to the New England Aquarium were among the family’s favorite outings when their three children were young. As their children got older and became involved in other activities, the Dwyers’ connection to the Aquarium grew from membership to philanthropy. Matt and Meg learned about our critically important global mission and conservation initiatives through Trustee Barbara Burgess. The Dwyers were especially interested in the creation of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life and the Aquarium’s leadership on climate change education and sustainable seafood.

Matt and Meg were excited to help support the development of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life, and in 2016 they deepened their commitment to the Aquarium and to the oceans with a generous gift to support the Center’s research and Marine Conservation Action Fund. When reflecting on their impact as donors, the Dwyers said, “We want our grandchildren and future generations to be able to enjoy the seaside and a healthy planet. By supporting the Aquarium’s research now, we can help protect the oceans and improve everyone’s quality of life.”

The Aquarium is grateful for their generous support.
Membership

Our members play a number of important roles in the Aquarium’s continuing success—as enthusiastic visitors, thoughtful critics, financial supporters, mission advocates, and message conveyors. We are deeply grateful for all they do and strive to provide them the best possible member experience.

To that end, we spent the better part of 2016 engaged in a deep-dive research project with Keen Independent Research LLC to better understand what our members most value as part of the Aquarium family and where we may be able to improve our efforts. The response was wonderfully overwhelming, with more than 2,000 households offering feedback. We learned that many members are happy with their membership and feel we don’t need to change a thing; but others are looking to be able to enhance their experience with more engagement opportunities.

So we got to work and on April 3, 2017, we proudly launched a new membership structure that allows members to personalize their membership experience with both the number of individuals they would like covered by their benefits (two, four, six, or eight people) and the level of benefits they would like to receive (Standard or Premium). To date, the response has been positive. We are eager to continue the momentum with new stewardship offerings, additional survey work, and, of course, our fantastic members.

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Navigator and Conservation Societies Friends and Family Evening

Nearly 500 guests joined us on Saturday, November 19, 2016, for our annual Navigator and Conservation Societies Friends and Family Night. Society members and their guests enjoyed an IMAX film and visited the New England Aquarium after hours, exploring the exhibits and educational presentations throughout the night. It was a perfect evening to thank our Giving Society donors who provide critical support during the year, helping ensure that the Aquarium continues to serve as a leader in ocean conservation, research, education, and volunteer programs for both youth and adults.

Photos: from left: Megan McCnamara, Rowan McCnamara, and Max McCnamara; Melissa Ballenger, Gail Ballenger, and James Ballenger; Jenny Shine and Jacqui McCoy; Melissa Menashi; Photos: from left: Megan McConnaughey, Rowan McConnaughey, and Max McConnaughey;
In Memoriam: Helen B. Spaulding

In 2016, Helen B. Spaulding, one of the New England Aquarium’s most cherished and long-standing supporters, passed away at the age of 88. Helen was one of the principal founders of the Aquarium, serving as President from 1979 to 1983 and Chair from 1983 to 1986. Helen was committed to raising public awareness of the oceans and dedicated nearly a half-century to growing the Aquarium into one of Boston’s major public institutions.

More than 50 million people have passed through the Aquarium’s doors because of that commitment. Many of our most meaningful and impactful programs, including right whale research and the sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation program, can trace their origins back to the stewardship Helen showed the Aquarium over many years. We are grateful to Helen and her lifetime commitment to protecting the blue planet.
We finished 2016 with 1.39 million visitors, which was 9% higher than 2015’s results of 1.28 million visitors. It represented the highest total attendance since 2002, the first full year of the Simons IMAX® Theatre operations. Our strong attendance in 2016 was attributable to the opening of the popular new Olympic Coast Exhibit and associated Tentacles Take Hold theme program, strong visitor satisfaction throughout the year, and an unusually warm winter.

Operating revenues increased by 8% to $48 million in 2016 due to strong attendance and releases from restrictions of certain gifts associated with master planning and the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium, which was publicly announced in June 2016. On the expense front, we managed to grow by only 2% to $43.7 million in 2016, yielding a healthy operating reserve of $4.4 million as compared to an operating reserve of $1.7 million in 2015.

Our overall financial position remains strong and should continue to improve in the years ahead. The Aquarium’s endowment and funds functioning as endowment increased roughly 7% to $18.6 million in the aggregate due to market appreciation and the application of $750,000 excess unrestricted cash to the funds functioning as endowment at yearend. Total debt decreased by roughly $2.0 million to $22.1 million in 2016 due to scheduled debt payments and a $750,000 voluntary payment from the Anderson Cabot endowment at yearend. Total debt decreased by roughly 2% to $43.7 million in 2016, yielding a healthy operating reserve of $4.4 million as compared to an operating reserve of $1.7 million in 2015.

We look forward to 2017 and beyond. We have prepared a thoughtful financial plan for 2017 that includes implementing the strategic plan of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life and the April opening of a new Science of Sharks exhibit in the lower level of the Center for Ocean Life and the April opening of a

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### Year-End Financial Summary

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We look forward to 2017 and beyond. We have prepared a thoughtful financial plan for 2017 that includes implementing the strategic plan of the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life and the April opening of a new Science of Sharks exhibit in the lower level of the Center for Ocean Life and the April opening of a new Science of Sharks exhibit in the lower level of the West Wing. We expect 2017 to be another solid year operationally, financially, and from a mission perspective.

Thank you to our staff, our volunteers, our members, our donors, and our Boards for your continued and valued support.

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### New England Aquarium Corporation

**Financial Results (in thousands of dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Revenue &amp; Support</th>
<th>FY 2016</th>
<th>FY 2015</th>
<th>CHANGE $</th>
<th>CHANGE %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions: Individuals &amp; Groups</td>
<td>$22,724.6</td>
<td>$20,189.2</td>
<td>$2,535.4</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Sales: Food, Gift Shop &amp; Events</td>
<td>12,004.0</td>
<td>11,385.1</td>
<td>618.9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memberships: Individual &amp; Family</td>
<td>2,954.7</td>
<td>2,814.8</td>
<td>139.9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate: Memberships &amp; Sponsorships</td>
<td>846.6</td>
<td>1,046.4</td>
<td>(199.8)</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts &amp; Pledges</td>
<td>2,087.2</td>
<td>2,536.1</td>
<td>(448.9)</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
<td>4,468.8</td>
<td>4,830.6</td>
<td>(361.8)</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets Released From Restriction</td>
<td>1,659.4</td>
<td>536.2</td>
<td>1,123.2</td>
<td>210%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,288.4</td>
<td>1,355.1</td>
<td>(66.7)</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Revenue &amp; Support</strong></td>
<td>$48,033.9</td>
<td>$44,492.5</td>
<td>$3,541.4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Operating Expenses

| Research, Conservation & Education | 8,280.5 | 8,220.9 | 59.6 | 1% |
| Exhibit Operation & Maintenance | 6,143.8 | 6,057.1 | 86.7 | 1% |
| Plant Operations | 7,087.6 | 7,462.0 | (374.4) | -5% |
| Cost of Retail Sales | 8,863.2 | 8,648.6 | 214.6 | 3% |
| General Administration & Supporting Services | 10,977.4 | 10,450.4 | 527.0 | 5% |
| Fundraising | 1,878.6 | 1,471.6 | 407.0 | 28% |
| Interest | 438.9 | 453.2 | (14.3) | -3% |
| **Total Operating Expenses** | $43,690.0 | $42,763.8 | $926.2 | 2% |
| **Operating Reserve (deficit)** | $4,343.9 | $1,728.7 | $2,615.2 | 151% |

### Other Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets

| Operating Reserve (deficit) | $4,343.9 | $1,728.7 | $2,615.2 | 151% |
| Non-Operating Revenues and Expense, Net | (384.0) | (84.5) | (299.5) | -354% |
| Net Assets Released to Fund Capital Improvements | 623.3 | 732.1 | (108.8) | -15% |
| Realized & Unrealized Gains (losses), Net | 459.6 | (127.6) | 587.4 | 460% |
| Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets & Debt Refinancing | (124.5) | 0 | (124.5) | 12,350% |
| Depreciation & Amortization Expense | (4,735.9) | (4,735.0) | (0.9) | 0% |
| Net Non-Cash Pension Related Changes | 145.1 | 56.6 | 88.5 | 156% |
| **Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted Net Assets** | $327.5 | (2,261.9) | (2,594.4) | -114% |
| **Increase (Decrease) in Restricted Net Assets** | $4,261.5 | (208.9) | 4,470.4 | -2,140% |
| **Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets** | $4,589.0 | (2,470.8) | 7,059.8 | 286% |

| Net Assets – Beginning of Year | $47,503.9 | 49,974.7 | (2,470.8) | -5% |
| Net Assets – End of Year | $52,092.9 | $47,503.9 | $4,589.0 | 10% |

* Operating reserve, as defined by management, excludes depreciation and amortization changes and non-recurring transactions.

Audited financial statements, with an unqualified opinion by Mayer Hoffman McCann P.C., are available upon request.