Push for marine site to get world recognition

Panel chairman Pramote Maiklad, a backer of the move, said that if the 11,734-square-kilometre area were recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), it would be Thailand's first marine World Heritage Site. This recognition would also help earn Thailand a lot of international support and could be used to promote eco-tourism.

NRC members and the panellists agreed to push for the Unesco recognition, but voiced concerns about the possible effect this might have on the lives of local residents, fishermen and sea gypsies.

NRC member Wanchai Sornsiri also called on the panel to ensure the plan also gets Cabinet approval.

The proposal was initially passed 187-10, with 11 abstentions, and eventually a 196-7 vote with two abstentions.