

## **Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop denounces that the PNV and PSE bill opens a dangerous path toward weakening the protection of Urdaibai**

The platform warns that, under the argument of streamlining administrative procedures for “strategic” projects, the proposal directly amends Law 5/1989 on the Protection and Planning of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve and allows new nautical and recreational uses in sensitive areas of the estuary.

### **Busturialdea, June 8, 2026**

The platform Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop denounces the fact that the bill presented by PNV and PSE to simplify and speed up administrative procedures for certain economic projects is not a neutral measure for Urdaibai. On the contrary, it explicitly introduces an amendment to Law 5/1989 on the Protection and Planning of the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve, which constitutes the main legal framework protecting this area.

The proposal is publicly presented as a tool to eliminate bureaucracy, reduce delays, and facilitate projects considered to be of economic interest. However, in the case of Urdaibai, its content goes far beyond mere administrative simplification: it modifies the regime governing permitted uses within the Reserve.

Specifically, the bill creates a new category of zones, called **P1.2**, intended for nautical and recreational uses in supratidal, intertidal, or subtidal areas. These zones would allow maritime facilities for the mooring, anchoring, and docking of recreational vessels, as well as passenger embarkation and disembarkation. The proposal also contemplates motorized navigation in certain areas, the development of bathing zones, and controlled dredging.

For Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop, these changes are especially serious because they affect the ecological heart of the Reserve: the estuary, the marshlands, and the transition zones between land and water. This is not just any territory, but an area internationally recognized for its environmental, scenic, and cultural value.

The platform considers it unacceptable that an amendment of this magnitude is being introduced through a law on “urgent measures” aimed at accelerating economic activity. Urdaibai cannot be treated as an administrative obstacle. Urdaibai is a protected area, and its protection cannot be weakened through the back door.

Although the bill does not formally remove Urdaibai’s protected status, it does partially redirect it by incorporating new recreational uses, maritime facilities, and cartographic delimitations into Law 5/1989 itself, potentially paving the way for future interventions in the estuary. This is the real risk: that what is presented today as land-use planning could tomorrow serve as legal cover for new projects and infrastructure.

The platform recalls that the Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve is already subject to strong urban, tourism, industrial, and recreational pressures. In this context, any legal reform should strengthen protection, restore degraded ecosystems, and reduce impacts—not open new avenues for intensifying uses in sensitive areas.

Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop demands that any amendment to Law 5/1989 be processed with maximum transparency, genuine public participation, rigorous technical and environmental assessments, and full respect for the precautionary principle. A Biosphere Reserve cannot be subordinated to the logic of administrative speed or short-term economic interests.

The platform further warns that this initiative fits into a troubling trend: presenting projects or reforms as “sustainable” when, in practice, they may weaken environmental safeguards and facilitate new interventions in Urdaibai.

Streamlining procedures cannot mean lowering protection standards. Simplification cannot become a synonym for deregulation. And Urdaibai cannot become a legislative testing ground for introducing uses that have until now been restricted precisely because of its ecological fragility.

For all these reasons, Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop calls for the withdrawal or substantial revision of all provisions affecting Law 5/1989 and demands that Urdaibai’s future be decided through protection, ecological restoration, and citizen participation—not through legislative urgency or the interests of those who have spent years trying to reduce the Reserve’s protections.

**Urdaibai does not need less protection. It needs more protection, more restoration, and more democracy.**