



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

February 23, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the impacts American fishing industries, seafood consumers and indigenous communities face as result of proclamations establishing Marine National Monuments (MNM) in the Western Pacific Region. Most recent in our region was President Obama's proclamation of August 26, 2016, massively expanding the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) was one of many organizations and individuals who expressed strong reservations over the scientific and empirical basis for this monument expansion and other MNMs in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters. Together, these large marine protected areas prohibit American commercial fishing vessels from operating in half of the U.S. EEZ waters in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

Impacts to U.S. Commercial Fishery Landings: The Hawaii longline fishery lands \$110 million of fresh (not frozen) fish, consistently ranking the Port of Honolulu as one of America's top 10 fishing ports in value landed. The PMNM expansion shuts this fishery out of an area that is twice the size of Texas. Located 50 to 200 miles from shore, this expanded monument area has historically produced 8 percent of the bigeye tuna and 11 percent of the swordfish landed by the fishery. Likewise, the expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands (PRI) MNM by Obama closed fishing grounds comprising 12 percent of the Hawaii longline fishery's landings. About 20 percent of the productivity of the Hawaii longline industry has been needlessly compromised by MNM expansions, executed by the Obama Administration under the Antiquities Act of 1906. These monuments also closed fisheries that produced half of the locally landed bottomfish and a lobster fishery. The closure of fishing grounds in the PRI and the Rose Atoll MNMs severely impacted the U.S. purse-seine and American Samoa-based longline fleets. The area of the PRIMNM formed 10 percent of the U.S. purse-seine fishing effort. The Rose Atoll MNM increased the area closed to American Samoa longline vessels by about 1,800 square nautical miles, an annual loss of about \$237,000 of albacore tuna.

Impacts to U.S. Commercial Fishing Industries: The loss of fishing grounds due to the MNMs will have an immediate and long-term effect on fishery participants, shore-side business and coastal communities that rely on the fishing industry. PMNM expansion has an estimated potential annual loss of more than \$9 million to fishery support businesses (e.g., fuel and gear suppliers), \$4.2 million in household income, and \$500,000 to the State of Hawaii in tax revenueⁱ. The impacts to the U.S. purse-seine fleet have devastated the U.S. canneries in American Samoa, an industry that represents 52 percent of the territory's gross domestic product and is its largest private enterprise employer. Further, U.S. commercial fishing vessels will be displaced into the much reduced U.S. EEZ waters to compete with recreational and small boat fishermen or the high seas to compete with foreign fishermen from Asia, this at a time when the United Nations is being asked to close 30 percent of the high seas to fishing.ⁱⁱ

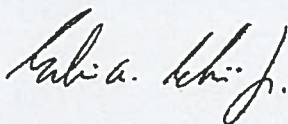
National Food Security: Hawaii imports 90 percent of all the food it consumes. Among locally produced food, fishing ranks as the single largest food producer in the state. About 60 percent of the commercially caught fish consumed in Hawaii is imported and about 40 percent is locally produced. Hawaii fisheries are also important to the nation, which depends on foreign imports for 90 percent of its seafood. The majority of the bigeye tuna (90 percent) and a substantial amount of the swordfish consumed in the continental United States are from the Hawaii fishery.^{iii, iv}

Regulatory Duplication: The Obama Administration used the Antiquities Act to overlay no-take or very limited-take monuments in areas that were already designated as marine protected areas under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and which allowed sustainable commercial fishing. The MSA, the preeminent federal fishing law, ensures the prevention of overfishing while achieving optimum yield for the benefit of nation. The management measures under which these fisheries have operated have set standards that have been internationally adopted by regional fishery management organizations worldwide^v. The monuments do not add any fishery conservation benefits or climate change mitigation (the purported purpose of the establishment of the monuments), especially to highly mobile species such as tunas, billfish, and sharks. Instead the monuments weaken U.S. fisheries, U.S. interests, U.S. negotiations and U.S. competition in the Pacific.

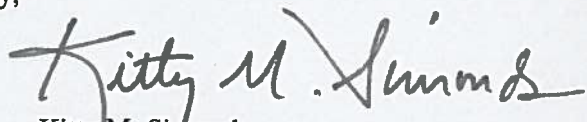
Federal Cost: Creation of the four MNMs in the Western Pacific Region have increased administrative and monitoring burdens on the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies that patrol these U.S. EEZ waters. The U.S. waters, now devoid of American commercial fishing vessels that served as a deterrent, are imperiled by encroaching foreign vessels. The establishment of the Marianas Trench MNM cost \$10 million, and costs to establish the PMNM (2006) amounted to about \$35 million for an area spanning 140,000 square miles.^{vi} The expanded PMNM area is three times the size of the original PMNM area, i.e., an additional 443,000 square miles. There is no known, publicly available cost and benefit analysis for the expanded PMNM; however, it is conceivable that the cost to establish the expanded MNM could reach more than \$100 million.

Council staff is available to provide additional information about the impacts of MNMs, which are utterly pointless and an affront to our nation's fisheries.

Sincerely,



Edwin A. Ebisui Jr.
Chair



Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

Attachments: Map of U.S. EEZ Regulated Fishing Areas, Western Pacific Region
Impacts of Marine National Monument Fishing Prohibitions

ⁱ National Marine Fisheries Service's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center presentation to the 168th Council, Oct. 12-14, 2016, Honolulu.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ipsnews.net/2016/03/un-begins-negotiations-on-treaty-to-protect-marine-resources/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Fisheries of the United States 2015.

^{iv} 2015 Pelagic Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report. Honolulu: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. http://www.wpcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2017-01-31_Final-2015-SAFE-Report.pdf

^v Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, etc.

^{vi} McCrea-Strub A et al. "Understanding the cost of establishing marine protected areas. Marine Policy 35 (2011) 1-9.



Impacts of Marine National Monument Fishing Prohibitions

February 18, 2017

MONUMENTS NOW COMPRISE ONE QUARTER OF THE ENTIRE U.S. EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (1,184,000 square miles in the Western Pacific and 4,913 square miles in the New England region)

- 141,000 square miles with establishment of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (MNM) in 2006 encompassing 0-50 nm around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) in 2006
- 192,000 square miles with establishment of monuments in 2009 around encompassing 0-50 nm around Rose Atoll (American Samoa), Pacific Remote Island Areas, and the Marianas Trench MNMs
- 408,000 square miles with expansion of monuments in 2014 of the Pacific Remote Islands (PRI) MNM, with boundaries around some of the islands to the full extent of the U.S. EEZ (0-200 nm around Wake, Johnston, Jarvis Islands).
- 443,000 square miles with expansion of the NWHI monument in 2016 to the full extent of the U.S. EEZ (0-200) around two-thirds of U.S. waters around the Hawaii Archipelago
- 4,913 square miles with establishment of the Northeast Canyons MNM in 2016.

MONUMENT FISHING PROHIBITIONS COULD HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MORE THAN \$69 MILLION ANNUALLY TO U.S. COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

- ~ \$10 million in landings, \$9 million to fishery support businesses, \$4.2 million in household income, and \$500,000 in State of Hawaii tax revenue from NWHI monument expansion area, which produced on average around 10% of the catch harvested by the Hawaii longline fishery
- ~ \$42 million in landings from expanded PRI monument, which produced on average over 12% of the catch harvested by the Hawaii longline fishery and about 10% of the catch from U.S. purse seiners that historically delivered tuna local canneries in American Samoa
- ~ \$0.25 million from the Rose Atoll monument from reduced fishing grounds to the American Samoa longline fleet in U.S. waters around American Samoa
- ~ \$1-2 million from Northeast Canyons MNM (Does not include loss from tuna and offshore lobster fisheries)
- PRI and Rose Atoll monuments were in part responsible for the closure of one of American Samoa's two canneries in December 2016 as a result of reduced supply of U.S. caught tuna. The closure resulted in the loss of a thousand jobs. The two canneries in American Samoa accounted for 52% of the Territory's gross domestic product and are the Territory's primary private employer.

MONUMENT FISHING PROHIBITIONS WEAKEN U.S. FISHERIES, INCREASE IMPORTS AND JEOPARDIZE U.S. FOOD AND NATIONAL SECURITY

- Monuments displace U.S. fishing fleets to international waters where they must fish alongside and compete with foreign fishing fleets
- Displaced fishing to more distant international waters increases trip costs and poses greater safety at sea risks

- Deterrence of foreign fishing fleet encroachment in the U.S. EEZ is compromised when U.S. commercial fishing vessels are removed from a quarter of the U.S. EEZ now designated as monuments
- Weakened U.S. fisheries impact national food security and foster increased imports. The U.S. already relies on foreign imports for 90 percent of seafood it consumes
- Displaced U.S. commercial fishing vessels could also concentrate effort and increase potential gear conflicts in the reduced areas of fishable U.S. waters that are also fished by recreational and small boat fishermen

MONUMENT FISHING REGULATIONS CAUSE REGULATORY DUPLICATION AND LACK CONSERVATION BENEFITS

- NWHI monument overlay the Protected Species Zone established under the MSA
- PRI monument overlay the 0 to 300-foot depth no-take and low-take zones established under the MSA and 0 to 3 mile refuges established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in many of the islands
- Rose Atoll monument overlay the Large Vessel Prohibited Area established under the MSA
- Marianas Trench monument's Islands Unit overlay the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' conservation zone
- All coral reef, deep-reef slope, and pelagic ecosystems in federal waters were subject to comprehensive fishery ecosystem management regulations established under the MSA prior to monument designation
- Monuments and other large-scale marine protected areas provide little to no added conservation benefits to marine resources, especially for highly mobile species such as tunas, billfish and sharks, as stated by highly renowned fisheries scientists

FEDERAL OVERREACH, INCREASED ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN, & POOR IMPLEMENTATION RECORD








- Without added conservation benefits, monuments are an unnecessary burden on the U.S. fishing industry and seafood consumers
- Congress has not provided the USCG increased funding to monitor and enforce the remote, large swaths of ocean designated as monuments
- NOAA and U.S. FWS have yet to release and finalize monument management plans for Rose Atoll, Pacific Remote Islands, and Marianas Trench monuments—almost 8 years after establishment

NO PUBLIC PROCESS, TRANSPARENCY OR ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- Monuments are established under the Antiquities Act of 1906, with Presidential Proclamations and directives to various agencies to implement regulations under their respective authorities. The National Environmental Protection Act and the Administrative Procedures Act are not required in the designation of monuments
- Monument regulations are rigidly implement Presidential directives with little to no discretion. Some Presidents have closed huge expanses of U.S. fishing grounds to sustainably managed U.S. fisheries. Adaptive management is impossible without additional Presidential or Congressional action.

US EEZ Regulated Fishing Areas, Western Pacific Region

Magnuson-Stevens Act

-  Longline fishing prohibited (1991 - 92, 2011)
-  Large Vessel Prohibited Area (2002)
-  False Killer Whale Southern Exclusion Zone (2012)
-  Guam No Anchor Zone (2004)
-  Bottomfish/Groundfish fishing prohibited (1986)
-  Bottomfish Vessels ≥ 50 ft prohibited (2006)
-  US EEZ: trawling, drift gillnets, poisons and explosives prohibited (1986 - 2004)

Antiquities Act

-  Marine National Monument (2006 - 2016)
-  Closed to all commercial fishing

