



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

July 27, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) expresses its concerns on the unintended consequences of fishing prohibitions within a proposed National Marine Sanctuary that encompasses all U.S. waters around the Pacific Remote Island Areas. These concerns are outlined in the affixed letter to the National Ocean Service, dated June 2, 2023. The Council met in American Samoa at its 195th Meeting, June 26-29, 2023 and reiterated the importance of maintaining U.S. tuna fisheries in the Pacific and the precarious situation for American Samoa's tuna economy, which would be jeopardized by prohibiting sustainable tuna fishing in the Pacific Remote Island Areas.

The Council asks that your Office reach out to the Governors of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam, acknowledging their March 27, 2023 letter on this topic (attached). We ask that you closely consult with them before a designation is made. Please have your staff reach out to us, kitty.simonds@wpcouncil.org or +1 (808) 522-8220 to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

John Gourley
Council Chair

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

CC: Hon. Lemanu Peleti Mauga, Governor, American Samoa
Hon. Arnold Palacios, Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Hon. Lourdes Leon Guerrero, Governor, Guam
Gina M. Raimondo, U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Janet Coit, NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator
Nicole LeBeouf, NOAA National Ocean Service Assistant Administrator
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council Members

Attached: *Letter from Territorial Governors opposing fishery closures, dated March 27, 2023*
Letter from Council to NOS on concerns of fishing prohibitions, dated June 2, 2023