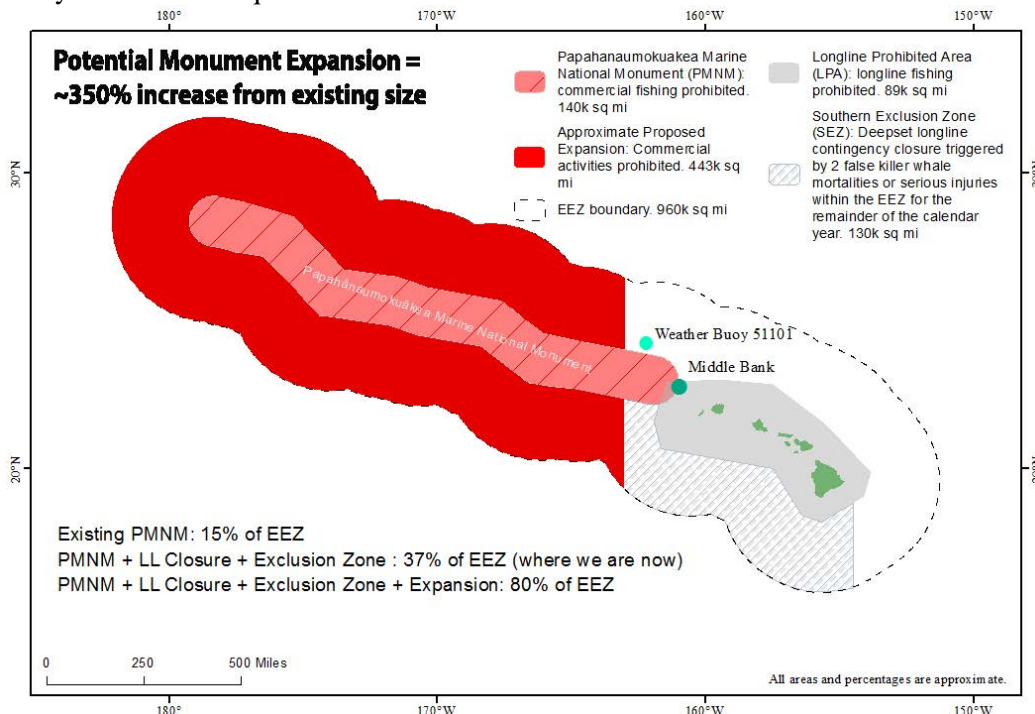


No Response from POTUS, Senator Schatz on Monument Expansion Concerns

HONOLULU (20 July 2016) U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii) has yet to respond to a June 20th request to meet with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council on his proposal to expand the size of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) fourfold. Also unanswered are letters sent by the Council to President Obama on April 8 and July 14, 2016, with concerns about the impact to Hawaii's fisheries of the proposals by Schatz and by seven Native Hawaiians in January 2016 that the President expand the monument using his authority under the Antiquities Act.



Council Chair Edwin Ebisui Jr., Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds and Vice Chairs McGrew Rice, William Sword, John Gourley and Michael Duenas reminded the Senator that the Council has federal jurisdiction over the waters within the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands beyond the current monument boundaries under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976.

“We are dismayed that you did not consult with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council prior to distribution of your letters, which have proliferated unsubstantiated statements through the media,” the Council wrote to Schatz. “As you yourself note, the Hawaii longline fishery uses ‘responsible and sustainable practices and has resulted in Honolulu’s recognition as one of the nation’s ten most productive fishing ports,’” the letter continued. “This fishery is not simply about economics, it is also about the sustainability of the State of Hawaii through local food security (see the State of Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan, the Governor’s Aloha + Challenge, and the Hōkūle‘a Worldwide Voyage Promise to Paeaina). ... It is essential that you meet with us so that the discussion on your proposal is grounded in truth and science.”

According to his website, Schatz was in Hawaii on July 17, before heading to Asia. While in Hawaii, he met with PACOM commander Admiral Harry Harris, toured the USS AMERICA, observed the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise, and met with sailors.

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Hawaii fishermen, businessmen and chefs rallied on July 15 to publicize their concerns about the impact of the proposed expansion on their livelihood and availability of fresh local fish.



September,” adds Simonds. “This decision will have a permanent negative impact on the livelihoods of thousands, the availability of local fresh fish for Hawaii and the United States, and the rights of the State of Hawaii and Native Hawaiians to cultural and economic opportunities in the waters and submerged lands in an area equal in size to the land mass of all of Washington, Oregon, California and Texas combined.”

For copies of the letters to Schatz and Obama and information on fisheries in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and concerns about the monument expansion, go to www.wpcouncil.org/nwhi-fisheries.

Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council: Appointees by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees selected by American Samoa, CNMI, Guam and Hawai'i governors: Michael Duenas, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association (Guam) (vice chair); Edwin Ebisui Jr. (Hawaii) (chair); Michael Goto, United Fishing Agency Ltd. (Hawaii); John Gourley, Micronesian Environmental Services (CNMI) (vice chair); Julie Leialoha, biologist (Hawaii); Dr. Claire Tuia Poumele, Port Administration (American Samoa); McGrew Rice, commercial and charter fisherman (Hawaii) (vice chair); and William Sword, recreational fisherman (American Samoa) (vice chair). Designated state officials: Suzanne Case, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources; Dr. Ruth Matagi-Tofiga, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources; Richard Seman, CNMI Department of Lands and Natural Resources; and Matt Sablan, Guam Department of Agriculture. Designated federal officials: Matthew Brown, USFWS Pacific Islands Refuges and Monuments Office; Michael Brakke, US Department of State; RADM Vincent B. Atkins, US Coast Guard 14th District; and Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office.

In its letters to the President, the Council said Presidential actions have already proclaimed 28 percent of the US exclusive economic zone in the US Pacific Islands Region as marine national monuments. All of the nation's marine national monuments are in this region, which contradicts Executive Order 12898 on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations and Executive Order 13158 on Marine Protected Areas. The July 14 letter also states, “Unilateral Presidential action to expand the PMNM under the Antiquities Act is contrary to the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, which over the last 40 years has resulted in sustainable US

fisheries and ecosystem protection. Expanding the PMNM under Antiquities Act also undermines the principles and public participation process established under the National Environmental Policy Act.”

“The scientific and public participatory requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, with which the Council must comply in managing fisheries, is a far cry from the token three-hour public meetings to be held by NOAA and the US Fish & Wildlife Service on Aug. 1 and 2 in Waipahu on Oahu and in Lihue on Kauai,” says Ebisui. According to the notice of the meetings, just released publicly on Monday, written comments can also be submitted in person during regular business hours at three locations on Oahu, Maui and the Big Island on these same days.

“A decision of this gravitas should require more than the decision of a single person or the desire by some to have something big to announce at the IUCN World Congress and 2016 Our Ocean Conference in