The senior scientist of a regional fishing body says a presidential executive order to expand Hawaii's protected waters is an abuse of federal law.

United States President Barack Obama announced a series of measures in 2014 to protect parts of the world's oceans which include expanding Hawaii's Papahanaumokuakea monument under the Antiquities Act.

The plan would increase the monument, or reserve, fivefold and could reduce the available fishing grounds in the US exclusive economic zone waters around Hawaii from 63 percent to 15 percent.

Members of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council said it would be detrimental to Hawaii's economy, food security and food production as 95 per cent of its fisheries rely on domestic fishing.

Paul Dalzell said claims that the expansion would improve conservation were false.

“The Antiquities Act was meant to protect small places. Stop them from being overrun by tourists or being stripped by souvenir hunters. And it's supposed to be the for the smallest area possible. It was never
intended to parcel off great large areas of land or indeed to be applied to make these huge expansions of water."

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