



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

August 28, 2018

Ms. Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813

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Dear Ms. Simonds:

Thank you for your letter concerning commercial fishing access in the marine national monuments and catch limits for bigeye tuna. I understand your concerns about the effect of the marine national monuments on U.S. fisheries. Let me assure you that the Administration will take these issues into consideration when contemplating possible revisions to the monuments.

I also completely understand your deep concerns regarding the bigeye tuna catch limit established at the recent meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has recently negotiated an increase for three regions of the Pacific – restoring the 2016 limits from 3,138 to 3,554 tons in the western and central Pacific, as well as from 500 to 750 tons in the eastern Pacific. I am hopeful the changes will enable the longline fishery to remain productive and sustainably target tuna throughout the fishing year, while demonstrating that continued international efforts may help to achieve increased catch limits in other fisheries and reduce negative impacts for the U.S. seafood industry.

Thank you again for your letter and for advising me of your apprehensions. I look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Wilbur Ross