



August 15, 2019

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The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

I write to you on behalf of the Hawaii Longline Association, which is comprised of 140 active US-flagged vessels and the Nation's only daily tuna auction. Hawaii longline vessels target tuna and billfish and land high quality, ice-chilled seafood for domestic consumption in Hawaii and other US markets. Hawaii longline vessel landings are annually worth \$100 million (dockside), consistently ranking Honolulu Harbor within the Nation's top ten ports in economic value. The Hawaii longline fishery is Hawaii's largest food producing industry – critical to local food security.

We have a simple request. Please reverse unnecessary fishery closures established by President Obama. Using the Presidential authority provided under the Antiquities Act, only you can undue the Marine National Monument fishing prohibitions. The best available science indicates that marine monuments do not protect highly migratory species such as tuna, billfish, sharks, sea turtles, and seabirds.

In 2014 and 2016, President Obama unilaterally expanded the boundaries of Marine National Monuments in the Pacific Ocean. As a result, all US waters around Johnston Atoll and 63 percent of US waters around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were closed to commercial fishing. These respective areas each produced around 10% of the historical catch of Hawaii longline vessels.

Our fleet needs access to nearby fishing grounds to operate efficiently. Due to monument prohibitions, the fishery is forced to fish in international waters along-side foreign vessels. Monument fishing prohibitions place our fleet at a significant competitive disadvantage. Foreign longline vessels (often heavily subsidized) fishing the high seas are large freezer boats that transship their catch at sea. In comparison, our vessels make relatively short trips, landing premium ice-chilled fish. Forcing our vessels to fish on high seas, farther from port, and among foreign competition is terrible fisheries management policy and contrary to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Such misguided policies serve to further exacerbate our seafood trade deficit and weaken key US fisheries. Alarming, intergovernmental negotiations are occurring next week to develop mechanisms to close the high seas to fishing (see enclosure), which when combined with monument fishing prohibitions, would end our well-managed fishery.

US fisheries are among the best managed in the world. You can be confident that in removing monument fishing prohibitions, that US tuna vessels will continue to be the most highly monitored, comprehensively regulated, and environmentally responsible fishing vessels on the planet. Our vessels fish in the blue water pelagic environment, nowhere near coral reefs or sensitive bottom habitat.

Please act swiftly to remove the Marine National Monument fishing prohibitions, which do not provide material conservation benefits, but do negatively impact our important US fishery.

Sincerely,

Sean Martin
President

Cc. Secretary Wilbur Ross Jr.
Secretary David L. Bernhard

Enclosure