

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the President of the Maui Cooperative Fishing Association, I would like to raise serious concerns regarding the letter asking your to expand the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument from 50nm to 200nm taking away the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) from fishing. This expanded closure would provide no additional benefits to the conservation and management of the resources found in those waters for number of reasons.

First; management of natural resources in that area are already fully managed for the benefit of our country through the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, among other national statutes, Executive Orders and policies.

Second; almost one fourth (24%) of the State of Hawaii's EEZ is already closed due to the Pāpāhānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. This expanded closure would shut down more that three fourths (77%) of our EEZ to fishing.

Third; the Hawaii longline fishery catches fresh tuna and other pelagic fish from those waters that are delivered to our local markets and restaurants upon which our families and friends depend. This supports our island's food security and is one of the main reasons why Hawaii imports 30% less seafood than the mainland while consuming three times more per capita.

Fourth; our US long line fishery is one of the most regulated and sustainable fisheries in the world. Closing the US waters to the US fisheries is totally uncalled for when all other countries are only now starting to prohibit foreign fishing within their domestic waters. You already closed waters in the US Pacific Remote Island Areas to US fishing fleets in 2014 through Executive Order with little conservation benefits. We encourage you to please consider the cumulative impacts these large marine closures have already had on our US domestic fisheries and the local communities that depend on them.

Finally; What really, is the purpose of this Expansion / Closure / Ban: the use of the much needed resources of the area?

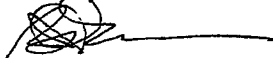
How much, is this Expansion / Closure / Ban going to affect Hawaii's Economy relating to Hawaii's fresh fish market?

Our local Long Distance Deep Seven Fishery and Lobster Fishery has taken a large set back with the closure, with the establishment of the North West Hawaiian Islands Monument. (Papahānaumokuākea National Marine National Monument)

There are other ways to Malama the area Resources and still be sustainable.

How can a few people make the decision to close such a large area when the whole state of Hawaii depends on these resources that affects all the people of Hawaii?

Sincerely



Basil Oshiro
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