



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor

Victor B. Hocog
Lieutenant Governor

May 3, 2016

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

Dear Mr. President:

I have recently become aware of the popular movement and various requests for you to expand under the Antiquities Act of 1906 the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. I understand your decision may depend on the results of further review of relevant data and the opinions of key leaders and various stakeholders involved. I would therefore like to share with you my opinion and perspective as Governor of the Northern Mariana Islands in which President George W. Bush created the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument (MTMNM) by Presidential Proclamation in 2008.

In general and obviously because the people of the Northern Mariana Islands have a great cultural love and long history directly linked to the Pacific Ocean – and the resources and way of life it provided our ancestors and our residents today – I support the concept to do whatever it takes to ensure the survival and enrichment of our oceans and seas. If expanding the PMNM will help ensure the ecological integrity of the marine resources and ocean life in this portion of the Pacific, I would easily support such a decision to expand that Monument.

However, leading up to the designation of the MTMNM, some government officials and some environmental organizations touted great potential economic impacts that the CNMI would receive from the creation of our Monument. One study suggested for example that the CNMI would benefit from approximately \$10 million per year in direct spending with approximately \$5 million per in year in tax revenue and the creation of nearly 400 jobs as a result of the creation of the MTMNM.

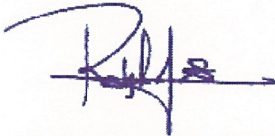
Unfortunately that has not happened; the CNMI has yet to receive any such benefits and I therefore encourage you to ensure your decision of whether to expand the PMNM is based on solid information and fact – not optimistic promises. Further, I also encourage you to consider and set into place the necessary administrative tools and support to ensure the

Caller Box 10007 Saipan, MP 96950 Telephone: (670) 237-2200 Facsimile: (670) 664-2211/2311

proper management of all the existing US marine monuments. Immediately after the creation of our Monument, the Departments and Commerce and the Interior were instructed to finish the MTMNM management plan within two years of the monument designation.

We are now in our eighth year since the MTMNM was established and our monument and the management plan process have yet to come to fruition. I therefore respectfully request your focus include the monuments already in existence and assistance with the completion of the existing MTMNM mandates – as well as on the merits of expanding the PMNM. Protecting our ocean resources is certainly a necessary consideration, but so too is the follow-through to complete what has already been started.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ralph DLG. Torres', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

RALPH DLG. TORRES

Governor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands