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Papahānaumokuākea: Schatz Absurdly Wrong
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MAKANI CHRISTENSEN (D) CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATE RESPONDS TO PAPAHA NAUMOKUAKEA

News Release from Christensen Campaign

June 17, 2016, Honolulu, HI—Locally Grown, Combat Veteran, Business Owner, Ocean Expert Makani Christensen announced today that Senator Brian Schatz's letter to the President, asking to expand the Papahānaumokuākea Monument from 50 miles to 200 miles is absurdly wrong and will be costly and pointless and is not necessary.

With critical issues facing Hawai'i such as the rail transit system and homelessness, then why are we putting an extra burden on our fisherman and Hawaii? Hawaii is the most isolated place on earth and as a result, we have a unique way of living that need to be protected. Our people have livelihoods that rely on the oceans and they want to pass this legacy onto their children, Not to the legacy of one person or a group disconnect to its people and our way of life. We deserve the right to evidence based policy to ensure a fair and democratic process when it comes down to the balance of people and the environment.

Our fishermen are among the major fresh food producers for Hawai'i, with about 80% of the catch consumed in our local communities. Environmental impact statements and long-term studies by many state and federal biologists have already shown how the existing monument provides all the necessary protections for endangered birds, marine mammals and turtles. An expansion of the monument would reach far beyond the range of these precious creatures, will not provide additional protection, and will exclude our own fishing fleet from what is left of Hawaii's Exclusive Economic Zone.

If the monument is increased to what would be an area larger than Washington, Oregon and California combined, our fishermen will be forced to compete with massive foreign fishing fleets which do not follow the kind of strict accountability as our longline fishers. These same foreign fleets are responsible for taking 98.4% of the bigeye tuna in the Pacific. The 1.6% of the tuna stock harvested by the families who own and operate these boats each year seems insignificant compared to the total international catch, but it's critically important to our efforts to be more self-sufficient.

Expansion of the monument will not protect our oceans from climate change, and has not prevented coral bleaching observed in areas that have been closed for a decade. Deep sea mining is something that can be prohibited without shutting down our waters to fishing. When it comes to culture, the monument has actually inhibited most cultural practices by severely curtailing access.

To claim the creation of the largest marine sanctuary on Earth for the sake of building a legacy sounds noble. But it does not really provide the protections some have claimed. It's not supported by long-term studies by the people who know the area best. And it comes with a price that is paid by everyone in Hawai'i who depend upon the few natural, sustainable resources the sea provides.

Mahalo,

Makani Christensen

Democratic Candidate for US Senate

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