

ENVIRONMENT

Former Governor, Chefs Protest Marine Monument Expansion

A rally at a Honolulu pier draws 200 who oppose a proposal to expand Papahānaumokuākea in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

JULY 15, 2016 • By Nathan Eagle   

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Set against a backdrop of commercial fishing boats at Pier 38 in Honolulu, former Hawaii Gov. George Ariyoshi told a crowd of roughly 200 people Friday that they need to work together to stop the proposed expansion of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

“We should not let the federal government come in and tell us what to do with our ocean,” the 90-year-old Ariyoshi said, receiving a round of applause.

It was the biggest rally to date against expanding the monument around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Some waved signs saying “Fishing Means Food” and “MVP Most Valuable Poke.”



Former Hawaii Gov. George Ariyoshi addresses the crowd Friday morning at Pier 38 during a rally against the proposed expansion of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Top chefs like Nico Chaize and George Mavrothalassitis were on hand, along with longline fishermen who object to a further encroachment on their fishing grounds.

Chaize told the crowd that the expansion would lead to higher poke prices and greater reliance on imported frozen fish.

The longliners primarily go after bigeye tuna, a highly valued species targeted for sashimi markets. They catch on average 8 percent of their annual haul of tuna from the area within the boundaries of the proposed expansion.

Hawaii's longline fleet of roughly 140 boats is [about to hit this year's 3,554-ton limit](#) for bigeye tuna in the Western and Central Pacific, prompting an early closure date for the fishery of July 22.

But the closure will likely be short-lived thanks to a federal rule that allows the Hawaii Longline

Association to pay Pacific Island territories for some of their allowable catch.



Anthony Quintano/Civil Beat

Jim Cook of POP Fishing & Marine, said the rally was organized to send a “hands off” message to President Obama.

Jim Cook, a member of the board of directors of the Hawaii Longline Association and vice president of POP Fishing & Marine, helped organize the rally.

He said its purpose was to tell President Barack Obama and Hawaii’s congressional delegation, “Hands off! Let us do what we do best.”

The decision to expand the monument from its existing 139,800 square miles to 582,578 square miles, as proposed by U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz, lies with the president, who could use his executive authority under the Antiquities Act to do so.

Proponents of the expansion have found a star chef of their own to add his name in support.

Restaurateur Sam Choy said he grew up in an old boat house in Hukilau Bay in Laie, raised by older Hawaiian fishermen.

“If we continually ignore the need to preserve our resources, and particularly the fish, we

If we continuously ignore the need to preserve our resources, and particularly the fish, we won't be able to give our children what we had growing up," Choy said. "We are at a time in our lives where we need to take bold measures. Expanding the boundaries of Papahānaumokuākea will ultimately benefit all of us who not only enjoy preparing and consuming fresh seafood, but want a healthy ocean for generations to come."

Rashid Sumaila, a world-renowned fisheries economist at the University of British Columbia, underscored that this tuna longline fishery is a quota-based fishery, "meaning that after the proposed expansion the tuna longline fishermen will still be able to catch the same amount of fish and therefore there will be no or very little impact to the long-line fishermen."

[Watch a video](#) of Civil Beat's livestream of the rally on our Facebook page.

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Sheila Raha

2 days ago

Mahalo to Sam Choy for bringing it back to his values! I'm curious, too... This group is touting "food security" yet they sell our ahi to high bidders at the auction. Why not keep it in the state, for the benefit of us all, if they care about feeding local families?

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Thomas Dye

2 days ago

Many thanks to Sam Choy for his long-term perspective. His stewardship ethic contrasts strongly with Gov. Ariyoshi's ownership perspective.

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