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WesPac Defensive About Proposed Monument Expansion

SEAFOODNEWS.COM By Susan Chambers - July 21, 2016

The marine monument fight is not over. In addition to seafood industry battles on the U.S. East and West Coasts, Hawaii also is fighting to retain access to fishing grounds.

Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, in June proposed expanding the size of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) fourfold.

In his letter to Pres. Barack Obama, Schatz stated, "Greater marine protection for the [Northwest Hawaiian Islands] and its surrounding waters will protect their unique ecology and their historical and cultural value, but this region also supports a variety of Hawai'i residents and businesses. I will not support an expansion proposal that does not adequately take these interests into account. Recreational and subsistence fishing; cultural practices and ocean

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sports; and commercial fisheries -- these traditional and customary practices all depend on access to and use of waters that currently lie outside the PMNM."

However, repeated requests by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council to Schatz and Pres. Obama to discuss the proposal have gone unanswered, according to a Council press release.

"We are dismayed that you did not consult with the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council prior to distribution of your letters ...

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