



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

July 11, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Four Marine National Monuments (MNM) in the Pacific prohibit American commercial fishing in half of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and increase administrative and monitoring burdens on the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies at an estimated cost of more than \$100 million. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council hopes that your ongoing review of the monuments (Executive Orders 13792 of April 26, 2017, and 13795 of April 28, 2017) will reopen these waters to U.S. fishermen and return management of fishing in these waters to the regional fishery management councils under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This Act is the nation's preeminent federal fishing law, which prevents overfishing and protects the ecosystem while achieving optimum yield for the benefit of the nation. All of the nation's eight regional fishery management councils as well as many others support this option (see attachment).

The Hawai'i longline fleet lands more than \$110 million of fresh fish, consistently ranking Honolulu as one of America's top 10 fishing ports in value landed. The fleet provides the nation with 80 percent of U.S. bigeye tuna, 65 percent of U.S. yellowfin tuna, and 55 percent of U.S. swordfish. The shore-side businesses and coastal communities that support this fishery provide an additional estimated \$14 million in income and tax revenue. Papahānaumokuākea MNM (PMNM) closes fishing grounds that accounted for 12 percent of this fishery's landings. The PMNM also closes a bottomfish fishery that once supplied half of the local market as well as a local lobster fishery.

Fishing prohibitions in the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRI), Rose Atoll, and Marianas Trench MNMs severely impact the U.S. purse-seine and longline fleets based in American Samoa. These fleets support a local cannery that represents 52 percent of the territory's gross domestic product and is its largest private employer. The PRI and Rose Atoll MNMs closed fishing grounds that accounted for 10 percent of the purse-seine fishing effort and reduced the longline fishing area by 1,800 square miles.

Without access to U.S. waters, American fishermen must either compete with recreational and small boat fishermen in a small area of the U.S. EEZ that is left open to them or compete with foreign fishermen from Asia on the high seas. For example, only 17 percent of the U.S. EEZ waters around Hawai'i is currently open to the local longline fleet. The displacement of U.S. vessels from U.S. waters increases the operational costs for American fishermen and exacerbates the country's dependence on foreign seafood imports.

Archie Soliai
Chair

Sincerely,

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

Attachment: List of Monument Fishing Prohibition Opposition/Fishery Management Council Support
cc: Tim Williams, Principal Director, External & Intergovernmental Affairs, US Dept. of the Interior

**List of Opposition to Monument Fishing Prohibitions
and Support for Management of Fisheries by Regional Fishery Management Councils**
(representative list)

Ryan K. Zinke, Secretary of the Interior, Final Report Summarizing Findings of the Review of Designations Under the Antiquities Act

Republican Members of the Congress of the United States (24 members) to President Trump, 9 November 2017, regarding Executive Order 13792

House Committee on Natural Resources, Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) and Member Aumua Radewagen (R-American Samoa) to President Trump, 7 March 2017

U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii), Hawaii Governor George R. Ariyohsi (D) and Hawaii Governor Benjamin J. Cayetano (D) to President Obama, 22 July 2016, regarding the expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Hawaii House of Representatives to President Obama, 3 May 2016, regarding expansion of the marine national monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Governor Eddie B. Calvo (R-Guam), Governor Lolo Moliga (D-American Samoa) and Governor Ralph Torres (R-Northern Mariana Islands) to President Trump, 3 March 2017

Governor Eddie B. Calvo (R-Guam) to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zine, 5 July 2017

Governor Lolo Moliga (D-American Samoa) to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, 7 June 2017

Senate Resolution No. 20-05, the Twentieth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, 11 July 2017

Regional Fishery Management Council Chairs (eight Councils) to President Trump, 1 March 2017

Regional Fishery Management Council Chairs (eight Councils) to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross Jr., 16 May 2017, regarding Executive Order 13792 and 13795

Hawaii Longline Association to President Trump, 17 September 2018, regarding marine national monuments

American Tunaboat Association comments on marine monuments, 7 July 2017

StarKist media statement on President Obama's Decision to Close Parts of the Pacific Ocean from Fishing, 14 August 2014