



StarKist.

June 16, 2020

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
The Department of State
Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I hope this letter finds you and your family well during this unprecedented global crisis. I write to you today on behalf of StarKist Co. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, StarKist is a vital component of the American food security apparatus, and also a major economic contributor in the United States. We thank you for your attention to China's growing footprint in the Pacific Ocean, which has become a concern to the economic interests and food security of the United States. In order to promote the interests of the United States and its commercial fishing industry, we encourage yourself and the administration of President Donald J. Trump to adopt the Department of the Interior's December 2017 recommendation to reduce the size of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and to open it to commercial fishing by U.S.-flagged vessels.

The United States commercial fishing industry has long been the safest, most efficient, and most sustainable in the world. In recent years, however, the industry has been under increased strain from an overabundance of burdensome regulations. Despite President Donald Trump's Executive Order 13921, Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth, which contained some real improvements, several policies put into place by the previous administration continue to block the full flourishing, expansion, and stability of the United States seafood industry. Chief among these outdated and misguided policies is the creation and expansion by then-President Barack Obama of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM): a 495,189 square mile national monument consisting of seven islands and atolls where commercial fishing is completely banned. While the pro-sustainability intent of the monument is laudable, the complete ban on fishing in the PRIMNM has had a pronounced negative effect on the United States' fishing industry.

The ban on fishing within the PRIMNM has forced U.S. vessels to travel much further afield in pursuit of the same migratory fish that would otherwise be harvested in the PRIMNM, burning additional fuel and raising costs for the consumer. Additionally, there they must compete with the heavily subsidized Chinese fishing fleet, the size of which has exploded in recent years. According to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, China has more than 350 active fishing vessels, and in 2017 caught 45% of all South Pacific albacore. With U.S. vessels excluded from fishing in roughly half of all U.S. exclusive economic zone waters, the United States is at a clear and serious disadvantage. A June 2020 report from the Government Accountability Office found that the lack of fishing access within the PRIMNM is one of the leading causes of tuna access for the United States. Should the ban remain in place, the United States will continue to cede economic ground to China, and consumers will be forced to rely on unsustainably sourced foreign imports.

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Then-President Obama established and expanded the PRIMNM through two Presidential Proclamations (Proclamation 8336 in 2009/Proclamation 9173 in 2014), invoking the power delegated to the president under the Antiquities Act to create and manage national monuments. However, the use of presidential proclamation to set aside the PRIMNM provides President Trump and his administration wide leeway to amend them in the name of improving and guaranteeing the food security of the United States. In 2017, President Trump directed then-Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to investigate and study the Obama administration's over-reaching use of the Antiquities Act. StarKist was extremely encouraged when, in December 2017, Interior released a recommendation on the PRIMNM that called for a reduction in the monument's size, as well as managed fishing in the area. Since then, the recommendation has been echoed by Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council (WPRFMC) chair Archie Soliai and executive director Kitty Simonds.

StarKist requests that you advise President Trump to sign a new Executive Order adopting the recommendation from the Department of Interior. With the ban removed, the American fishing industry could realize its full potential, providing Americans with the seafood they want and need and putting our people back to work. Such an act would be yet another bold step taken by this administration to protect the food security of all Americans, promote the growth and expansion of a homegrown American industry, end American reliance on unsustainable foreign seafood, and to ensure that the American fishing industry is able to compete with China on a level playing field.

Thank you again for leadership. We appreciate your support to help reverse then-President Obama's decision in 2014 to expand the PRIMNM, which has made it difficult for StarKist to maintain its operations in American Samoa. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any questions you might have. I can be reached by phone at 412-323-7585, or by email at Andrew.choe@starkist.com.

Sincerely,



Andrew Choe
President & CEO
StarKist Co.