



January 19, 2021

Mr. Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
US Department of Commerce
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Assistant Administrator Oliver:

We, the Governors of the Territory of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Territory of Guam, write to you to respectfully request that the National Marine Fisheries Service provide an additional 90 days to provide comment on the proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the seven threatened corals in U.S. waters in the Indo-Pacific.

The proposed critical habitat encompasses 230 square miles of shallow water areas surrounding the islands in our jurisdictions, with most of the proposed designated area occurring within Territorial and Commonwealth waters. The designation has the potential to impact a wide range of activities necessary to maintain our island economies and infrastructure. Our governments were not consulted in advance of the proposed rule, and require the additional time to review the rule and associated supporting documents.

Thank you for considering the request.

RALPH DLG. TORRES
Governor
Commonwealth of
the Northern Mariana Islands

LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
Governor
Territory of Guam

LEMANU P. S. MAUGA
Governor
Territory of American Samoa

Cc: Paul Doremus, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, NOAA NMFS
Samuel D. Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NOAA NMFS
Honorable Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, American Samoa
Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, CNMI
Honorable Michael F. Q. San Nicolas, Guam