



June 13, 2022

Dear Council Members and Staff,

I have a few incremental updates for you below. I hope to join part of the meeting (virtually) as well, but have several overlapping obligations so I will let Council staff know closer to the dates.

South Pacific Tuna Treaty

I can provide a brief update on the broad goals and objectives of our most recent discussions with the Pacific Island parties to the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, but I will not go into the specific details, as these are ongoing and ever-evolving negotiations.

Through these negotiations we are seeking only to update the text of the Annexes to the South Pacific Tuna Treaty, which currently provide the terms of industry's fishing access and fees, some of which are specified only through the end of this year. The U.S. delegation has focused our negotiations so that we can:

- Specify terms of fishing access for U.S. vessels for 2023 and beyond; and
- Make targeted updates based on what we have learned from implementing the Treaty provisions on a voluntary basis.

We are also seeking to negotiate a new Economic Assistance Agreement to replace the current Economic Assistance Agreement which is associated with the Tuna Treaty and which will expire in June 2023.

Throughout the negotiations, the Pacific Island parties have been singularly focused on receiving a firm commitment from the United States government that we can and will increase the assistance provided annually from \$21 million per year to \$60 million per year, or risk having some or all the Pacific Island parties initiate the process to withdraw from the Tuna Treaty altogether.

Indeed, several days ago, Assistant Secretary Medina received a letter from the Chair of the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC), Fijian Minister of Fisheries, the Honorable Semi Koroilavesau, that reiterated the Pacific Island parties' request that the U.S. Government's contribution under the Treaty be increased to \$60 million per annum.

The U.S. is considering how best to respond to this request to triple the economic assistance provided to the region through this mechanism.

Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument

The USG received a proposal from the Protect the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition (PRIC) to expand and rename the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM) on May 31, 2022.

Members of the PRIC met with heads of agencies to discuss the proposal during Capitol Hill Ocean Week on June 7; USG attendees included Chair Brenda Mallory (CEQ), Deputy Director Jane Lubchenco (OSTP), Assistant Secretary for Fish and Parks Shannon Estenoz (DOI), Administrator Richard Spinrad (NOAA), and Assistant Secretary Monica Medina (Department of State).

Proponents are advocating expanding the Pacific Islands Marine National Monument boundaries around Howland and Baker Islands, Palmyra Atoll, and Kingman Reef from the current 50 nautical miles to 200 nautical miles, the full extent of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the United States. The Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument is recognized as an area of unique history and vast cultural significance to many Pacific Island nations and cultures, including Native Hawaiian. The proposal to expand PRIMNM is supported by several groups including the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition, 23 Indigenous Peoples from throughout Hawai'i and Guam, seven community organizations, and Congressman Ed Case.

At the Our Ocean Conference, the United States announced it will launch an interagency working group or commission to evaluate naming practices for existing and future marine national monuments and national marine sanctuaries, with particular emphasis on the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. This renaming process would establish a new name for PRIMNM that is reflective of the area's significance within Pacific Island cultures and is supported by Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Island groups.

UN Meetings

Some postponed UN meetings have now been held will soon be held:

- The UN held an informal consultations of States parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement May 17-19, 2022. That meeting focused on the ecosystem approach to fisheries management as well as preparations for the UN Fish Stocks Agreement resumed Review Conference. The ICSP included panels with experts from RFMOs, States, and other organizations to share best practices on implementing EAFM. The UN also intends to hold an informal consultation of States parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement in the first half of 2023, focused solely on planning for the resumed Review Conference.
- The UN Fish Stocks resumed Review Conference is currently slated to be held in 2023, if conditions allow.
- A UN General Assembly workshop on the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks was originally scheduled for August 2020 but has been postponed to August 2-3, 2022. The workshop will inform a review of provisions and recommendations related to bottom fishing as part of the negotiations of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on sustainable fisheries.
- The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) will be held August 15-26 in NY. The President released a new draft of the text on May 30th in advance of IGC5. While delegations made progress at IGC4, a number of key issues remain outstanding in the text.
- The UN Ocean Conference, originally scheduled for June 2-6, 2020, will be held in Lisbon from June 27 to July 1, 2022.

Other items of Interest to the Council

- The United State co-hosted the 7th Our Ocean Conference with Palau in April. Overall the conference generated over 400 commitments worth over \$16 billion, with over \$2.6 billion in U.S. announcements. Linked [here](#) is a fact sheet on the U.S. announcements at the conference. You can find global commitments in the map viewer at the bottom of this page: <https://ourocean2022.pw/commitments/> or at <https://viewer.ouroceanconference.org/>. To use the viewer follow these steps:
 - 1. Hit the 3rd button down to switch from map to list.
 - 2. Hit the top button to see sort function
 - 3. select 2022 for the year, hit top button again to collapse menu (you can also do further sorting in this menu by thematic area, organization, or target country)
 - 4. select “commitments” or “organizations” on the top right to see a list by announcement or by announcing organization.
- Deep-sea Mining: The ISA Council met in person in Kingston March 21 to April 1, 2022 and will reconvene from July 18-29. Greg O’Brien, from the Department of State Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs is scheduled to brief this meeting of the Council about the ongoing work on the draft ISA seabed mining regulations, standards, and guidelines.
- The 10th Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles (IAC) part II will be held in Panama City, Panama from June 17-19, in continuation of the first part of the IAC 10th Conference of the Parties which occurred via videoconference on June 30, 2021.

Sincerely,

C. Colin Brinkman
Office of Marine Conservation