



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

May 31, 2023

Kitty Simonds
Executive Director
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Simonds:

This letter responds to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's (Council) final action taken at the 194th Council meeting as detailed in your April 14, 2023 letter to NOAA, amending the Council's prior December 2022 action for the Papahānaumokuākea Monument Expansion Area (MEA).

NOAA finds that, with the exception of the recommendation providing Native Hawaiian Subsistence Practices Fishing Permit applicants the ability to request limited cost recovery by selling their catch, the Council's amended recommendations fulfill the purposes and policies of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) and the goals and objectives of the proposed sanctuary. As detailed in NOAA's February 22, 2023 letter, any recommendation for the allowance of "sale" is inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the proposed sanctuary. Accordingly, NOAA rejects that portion of the Council's recommendation providing Native Hawaiian Subsistence Practices Fishing Permit applicants the ability to request limited cost recovery by selling their catch. This finding concludes the NMSA section 304(a)(5) process for the purpose of the proposed sanctuary designation within Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

Per the NMSA section 304(a)(5), based on this finding, NOAA will begin to prepare regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, for those parts of the Council's recommendations that it has accepted.

Coordination with the Council under the NMSA section 304(a)(5) for the proposal to designate marine portions of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument as a national marine sanctuary has been a critical step in the proposed sanctuary designation process. On behalf of NOAA, I would like to thank the Council for its time and effort in this matter.



Please contact Kristina Kekuwa at Kristina.Kekuwa@noaa.gov if you have any questions or require more information.

Sincerely,



Nicole R. LeBoeuf
Assistant Administrator
for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone
Management

cc: Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries (NMFS)
Sarah Malloy, Regional Administrator (Acting), NMFS, Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO)
Gerry Davis, Assistant Regional Administrator for Habitat Conservation, NMFS, PIRO
Jarad Makaiau, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, PIRO
John Armor, Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS)
Kristina Kekuwa, Regional Director, ONMS Pacific Islands Region
Eric Roberts, Superintendent, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument