



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

June 27, 2022

John Armor
Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Ocean Service
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear John,

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council), at its 191st meeting on June 21-23, 2022, discussed the Council's action to develop fishing regulations for the Monument Expansion Area and **directed staff to send a letter to Office of National Marine Sanctuaries noting the need for improved communication to clarify the confusion in the sanctuary designation process.**

It appears from your letter of June 16, 2022 that there may be some misunderstanding between the Council and Sanctuary that has resulted in confusion on the process to consider sanctuary designation for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The Council intends to develop fishing regulations consistent with Proclamation 9478, as well as the Proclamations for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. However, it would be helpful to our process if the Sanctuary would provide a detailed explanation as to where the Council's proposal may not meet the objectives and goals of the Sanctuary so that we may address them, as appropriate. In terms of a timeline, we would appreciate meeting with Sanctuary to discuss a reasonable timeline to achieve both our goals.

At its meeting, the Council further **recommended including requests to clarify the following issues regarding the sanctuary proposal:**

- a. Limiting the proposed sanctuary boundaries to current Papahānaumokuākea and Monument Expansion Area boundaries to honor the previous agreement made with the Kauai fishing community;**
- b. Incorporating cooperative research, where fishing is conducted along with scientists, in the Monuments and proposed sanctuary to provide additional value to assessing stocks across the entire Hawaii archipelago; and**
- c. Approaches to address Native Hawaiian Practices that include fishing within the proposed sanctuary, including considering them along with other non-commercial fishing.**

It is unclear where the proposed sanctuary boundary would end, which in turn makes it difficult for the Council to decide on the most appropriate fishing regulations. Fishing that involves Research or Native Hawaiian Practices should also be considered a type of non-commercial fishing for the purposes of needing regulations. Clarification would allow the Council to better address the regulatory needs in the proposed sanctuary.

We look forward to continued discussions on these issues and to continue engagement on meeting the goals and objectives of the Proclamations and proposed sanctuary. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Joshua DeMello, the Council's lead on this issue, at the Council office (808)522-8220.

Sincerely,



Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director