



**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

September 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 192nd meeting on September 20-22, 2022, discussed the Council's action to develop fishing regulations for the Monument Expansion Area and **directed staff to solicit additional input from the community on the following alternatives:**

- 1. No Action;**
- 2. Status Quo-Fishing regulations in the MEA would mirror the fishing regulations in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM);**
- 3. Prohibit commercial fishing;**
- 4. Require federal permits and reporting for a non-commercial fishing under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) that allows for non-commercial fishing (as defined in 50 CFR §665.12); and**
- 5. Require a federal subsistence fishing permit for Native Hawaiian practices with a definition of subsistence and options for including customary exchange.**

The Council will be working with NMFS on finalizing the amendment for final action at its 193rd meeting in December. Federal permitting would also include annual reviews of catch and effort in accordance with existing Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and standard requirements under 50 CFR 665 such as permit sanctions, gear restrictions, requirement for vessel monitoring systems (VMS), at-sea observer coverage, notification requirements, and other provisions required under the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan. Council staff will be working in the next few months to identify the potential levels of sustainability for management unit species that may include MSY, underutilized portions of existing stock assessments, and past levels of catch by persons fishing under previous permits.

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. We will continue to work with your staff to invite them to participate in the upcoming public meetings when the arrangements are made. 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