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PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
GOVERNOR

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LT. GOVERNOR

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT**

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August 21, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
United States Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

On behalf of the people of American Samoa, I am writing to respectfully request the removal of commercial fishing prohibitions in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument to provide greater fishing access. This strategic adjustment will provide essential relief and opportunity for American Samoa's longline fleet, ensuring their continued viability and bolstering the tuna industry that drives our local economy.

As you conduct your review of all existing Marine National Monuments, we humbly request that the U.S. Department of Commerce open the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument for commercial fishing seaward of 12 nautical miles. This action would provide vital economic relief to our fishing community while upholding the environmental protections for the Atoll's critical habitats. With the proposed change, all coral reefs at Rose Atoll would still be protected, as would the valuable seabird and turtle nesting grounds.

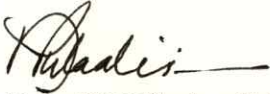
This action is crucial for strengthening our American Samoa fisheries and increasing the supply of U.S.-caught tuna to our local cannery. The American Samoa longline fleet's Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification is paramount to our economy, national security, and the nutrition of American children. This certification allows our cannery to fulfill vital contracts, providing tuna to U.S. military members and school lunch programs across the nation. The fleet's ability to operate profitably directly impacts these essential services and provides vital support to our tuna industry, which serves as American Samoa's primary economic driver. The monument's closure to fishing has increased operational challenges and contributed to the decline in active vessels.

The American Samoa longline fishery operates under rigorous management. This type of fishing operates no deeper than 300 meters and has no interaction with bottom habitats. The primary catch is highly migratory pelagic species like albacore and skipjack tuna. These tuna species are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. Keeping the marine reserve closed to longliners does very little to benefit tuna stock conservation.

Expanding available fishing grounds in the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument for American Samoa's commercial longline fishermen aligns with President Trump's Executive Order on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness. It will strengthen the U.S. fishing industry by reducing regulatory burdens and enhancing domestic seafood production and exports.

We remain committed to the sustainable management of our fisheries and natural resources, embracing our role as stewards of the only U.S. EEZ in the Southern Hemisphere. We eagerly await your favorable response and remain at your disposal for any further information or clarification. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pulaali'i', followed by a horizontal line.

Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula
Governor