

‘O wau iho nō ‘o Makani Gregg a no Moku o Keawe, Hawai‘i mai au. I am testifying in strong support to have no action and keep commercial fishing prohibitions active because I am in strong opposition to opening commercial fishing in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and the Pacific Islands Heritage Monument. I speak as a kupa‘āina and Kanka ‘Ōiwi scientist (MS Tropical Conservation Biology and Environmental Science), Program Coordinator for nonprofit Pōhaku Pelemaka, member of Nā Kai ‘Ewalu, a business owner for Kahauliuli LLC, and a mother who has a deep relationship with Papahānaumokuākea and its surrounding waters of the Moananuiākea. I am also an alumni of the Kū‘ula program established in 2008 through UH Hilo and NOAA which took aspiring kanaka students pursuing science and resource management to Papahānaumokuākea which now the majority still serve in research, management, education, and policy including having a seat in various councils, advisors and members of several cultural working groups. The dedication list is long and the impact is great with the utmost commitment to our ‘aina kupuna, Papahānaumokuākea. All the work we all do outside of Papahānaumokuākea is for our ‘aina akua/kūpuna such as Papahānaumokuākea, our kūpuna and next generations. That is why we show up every day.

I am beyond words of being grateful and blessed to have learned from both my human kūpuna (those living and those living through their successors) and my ‘aina kūpuna (nonhuman including environment and spirituality). They have and will continue to teach me as long as they are equipped too. So, keeping a place pristine and untouched as much as possible is the best management strategy for a place like Papahānaumokuākea. There is really nothing and nowhere else in the world like it, such is why it is a World Heritage site in the first place. So that reverence needs to stay intact, it is our duty. Today there are so many new and improved technologies and safe guards to keep commercial fishing outside of these areas. And the rules are in place to manage the overharvesting so that fish can be eaten for the next seven generations.

These areas should not be for profit of monies but profit for our living treasures. These are the safe houses for our resources/food/sustenance to thrive, feel, feed, and breed. Because, if there is reduced fish catch outside of these protected areas then that means there will be major reductions in fish catch inside of these protected areas. Then what? Again we, the people, that have the degrees, that have the experience, that the skills and aloha for our resources, need to take a stand and say NO COMMERCIAL FISHING in Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and the Pacific Islands Heritage Monument. These are safe places to ensure commercial fishing can continue to happen outside in the open areas. Let these places live without human taking.

MAHALO NUI.

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