

Statement by the Honorable John Fleming
Chair, House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
Oversight Hearing on
“The Potential Implications of Pending Marine National
Monument Designations.”
September 29, 2015

Today, the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans will look at a lesser known side of the Antiquities Act: the designation of Marine National Monuments.

Like the designation of land-based national monuments, marine monuments could have significant impacts not just regionally but nationwide as well.

Many of my colleagues here today represent noncoastal districts, however we can all relate to the issue when a President abuses the Antiquities Act as a means to shut off multiple uses of lands and waters. This is a tool that President Obama has used more than any other American president to date. Just because the Antiquities Act has been used by Republican Presidents does not justify such closures.

While there aren't any Marine National Monuments currently being considered off of the coast of my home state of Louisiana, the potential impacts that such a designation could have on our multiple industries and our world renowned restaurants. While more than 30,000 Louisiana jobs are directly supported by the seafood industry Massachusetts and Alaska's seafood industries support more than 160,000 jobs that will be directly impacted by

potential designations that are now on the table. One of our witnesses here today directly employs 150 of these workers himself – all of whom would be effected by a Marine National Monument designation.

What is really most troubling here is that these areas already have a great deal of protections under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. These are longstanding protections that have the support of over fifteen hundred fishermen and community residents in New England – all of whom are opposed to a potential Marine National Monument off their coast. I ask unanimous consent to enter their letter into the Record.

(hearing no objection, so ordered).

Another area we will be looking at today – the Aleutian Islands in Alaska – was submitted through NOAA's (*Noah's*) National Marine Sanctuary public nomination process for additional protections and was denied as the proposal did not demonstrate the support from a "breadth of community interests." Now, those same special interests are trying to take a second bite at the apple by petitioning the President to designate an even larger area as a Marine National Monument.

While we will hear today that the impact of these potential designations would be devastating to the local communities and economies, there is much more at stake here. According to federal statistics, the North Pacific and New England rank one and two in total landings revenue by region – well over half of U.S. harvested seafood landings. The only thing monumental

in all of this is the staggering impact it could have on our seafood markets.

This is an important issue and we are privileged today to hear from on-the-ground experts. I look forward to hearing from them and from the Administration on its plans.