

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

March 7, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Access to several of the Nation's key fisheries is in jeopardy -- through the establishment and expansion of Marine National Monuments. All of these marine monuments have been created by Presidential Proclamations under the Antiquities Act of 1906. In the U.S. Pacific Islands region, for example, over half of U.S. waters have been closed to commercial fishing by a stroke of the pen and without scientific evidence, socioeconomic analysis, or a deliberative and public processes as are mandated under the amended Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management of 1976 (MSA), the nation's primary fisheries law.

The loss of U.S. fishing grounds makes our consumers more dependent on foreign seafood sources, as only ten percent of the seafood consumed in the U.S. is domestically produced. Marine National Monuments created in the U.S. Pacific Islands resulted in the U.S. tuna purse-seine fleet losing access to historical fishing areas including all U.S. waters (0–200 miles) surrounding Jarvis Island, Wake Island, and Johnston Atoll, remote, uninhabited equatorial possessions of the United States, totaling 1,184,000 square miles. The Hawaii longline fleet also lost access to these areas as well as to two-thirds of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone around the Hawaii Archipelago. At the same time, U.S. government negotiators agreed to reduce significant access of the U.S. purse-seine vessels to the high seas within the Western and Central Pacific Ocean as well as catch limits for U.S. longline vessels. Such actions exemplify how a President and government bureaucracies can dispassionately decimate U.S. fishing industries.

The commercial fishing prohibitions of Marine National Monuments impact shore-side businesses and local economies of the U.S. In December 2016, for example, one of the two canneries in American Samoa, which represent over half of the local private sector workforce, and over half of the Territory's Gross Domestic Product, ceased operations due to lack of U.S. tuna supply. The remaining cannery has stated that it may close if the regulatory conditions do not change. Likewise, the loss of access to highly productive fishing grounds in the northeast has exacerbated the decline of many fishing ports in the region.

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To remedy the impacts that face the U.S. fishing industry, you can act swiftly and effectively to remove all marine monument fishing prohibitions. The fisheries would continue to be managed under federal law (MSA), through the Regional Fishery Management Councils and the Department of Commerce. U.S. fisheries support hundreds of thousands of direct jobs, millions of indirect jobs, and billions of dollars in annual revenue. Removal of the fishing prohibitions stipulated in the monument proclamations and the return of U.S. fisheries management to the Regional Fishery Management Councils would continue to prevent overfishing and protect the marine environment as required by the MSA and other applicable laws, while allowing our fishing fleet to compete with their foreign competitors.

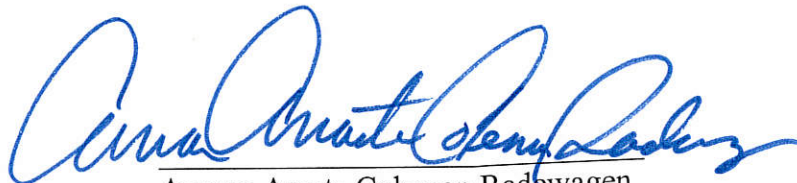
Using the Antiquities Act to close U.S. waters to domestic fisheries is a clear example of federal overreach and regulatory duplication and obstructs well managed, sustainable U.S. fishing industries in favor of their foreign counterparts. You alone can act quickly to reverse this travesty, improve our national security, and support the U.S. fishing industry that contributes to the U.S. economy while providing healthy, well-managed fish for America's tables.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources



Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress

cc: The Hon. Wilbur Ross, Secretary, Department of Commerce
The Hon. Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources