

Mayor:
CLYDE ROBERSON

August 19, 2016

Councilmembers:
TIMOTHY BARRETT
LIBBY DOWNEY
ALAN HAFFA
ED SMITH

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

City Manager:
MICHAEL MCCARTHY

RE: Concern about the Use of the Antiquities Act to Designate National
Marine Monuments

Dear Mr. President:

The City of Monterey has long supported the wise management of our coastal resources by federal and state agencies including by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Pacific Fishery Management Council. The City also supports its historic fishing community, as fishing remains important to Monterey, contributing strongly to the economy and culture of the region. The City supports publically transparent, science-based processes in making ocean management decisions—such as the mandate embodied in the federal Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act. The Magnuson Act (MSA) has a proven track record of success in ensuring the sustainability of our marine resources.

The MSA mandate provides for a fully transparent, scientific, peer-reviewed process, with thorough stakeholder involvement. These values – transparency and robust public participation – are also promises heralded in your Administration's National Ocean Policy Plan.

Thus it was with concern that we recently learned of a proposal to ask you to designate virtually all the offshore seamounts, banks and ridges off California as monuments under the Antiquities Act, and to prohibit commercial fishing permanently. This proposal was developed without public knowledge or participation, much less scientific or economic review and analysis. Certainly there was no transparency.

If the proposed areas were irreversibly closed under the Antiquities Act, this action would be in direct conflict with both the bipartisan Congressional mandate of the MSA as well as your Administration's own ocean policies.

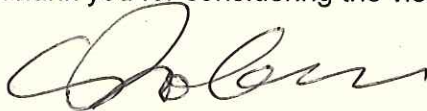
The areas identified in the proposal are indeed special places – they are rich in marine life and support valuable corals, sponges, and structures. If there are real threats to these areas, such threats and management measures should be considered—in a public process. The City commends the law enforcement efforts to enforce laws dealing with illegal fishing and other activities that might harm our bay, and this is not limited to protecting seamounts.

All these seamounts and banks also are important for fisheries. Tunas, swordfish, rockfish, spiny lobster, sea urchins, white seabass and coastal pelagic species including mackerels, bonito and market squid are fished in southern and central California. In northern California, albacore tuna and other species provide fishing opportunities to portfolio fishermen who, for the past few seasons, have been unable to rely on Chinook salmon and Dungeness crab fisheries. These offshore areas are critical to the fishing economy of California.

Precautionary policies and processes for management review, protecting marine resources and habitat, including deep-sea corals, already exist under the MSA, as well as other Congressionally mandated laws, such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The City believes conservation of special areas and fishery management are best accomplished under the transparent, science-based policies embedded in the Magnuson Act. Use of the Antiquities Act cannot create the robust science and public process, including the concept of Marine Spatial Planning, so prominent in your National Ocean Policy.

Thank you for considering the view of the City of Monterey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Roberson', written in a cursive style.

Clyde Roberson
Mayor

CC Representative Sam Farr
Council on Environmental Quality