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Honorable Doug Lamborn, Chair  
Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans  
Committee on Natural Resources  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Lamborn:

My name is Sean Martin. I am the President of the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA). I ask that the Subcommittee consider these comments on behalf of the longline fishermen of Hawaii and the associated industries and fish consumers in Hawaii as you assess possible legislation concerning the National Marine Monuments in the Pacific Ocean.

**Recommendation:** The HLA maintains that establishment of the large national marine monuments in the U.S. waters around Pacific Islands (a) is scientifically unsupportable; (b) is unnecessary; (c) and is harmful to U.S. fishing interests. If the monument designations cannot be reversed, we recommend that the prohibition of commercial fishing in the monuments be rescinded as long as the fishing is consistent with U.S. laws and regulations.

HLA and the Fishery: HLA was formed to provide an organization to work with the U.S. Government and others to ensure that regulations affecting the Hawaii longline fishery would be effective and enforceable while imposing the least burden necessary to achieve conservation needs. HLA has collaborated in the development of regulations and conducting research into such areas as gear modifications to protect special species such as sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals. We are proud of our efforts which have resulted in the Hawaii longline fishery being a model fishery for the Pacific. It may be the most comprehensively managed fishery in the Pacific. The local markets are dependent on our fleet. We have 150 active vessels, and we land about \$100 million worth of fish each year, with a total economic impact of 2,350 jobs and several hundred million dollars in related seafood industry income. The fishery supports jobs on fishing vessels, on the docks, at suppliers, and in the fish wholesale and distributor markets.

HLA members recognize the need for fishery regulations. The primary species we target are tuna and associated species that are highly migratory. No single nation can control fishing sufficiently to ensure sustainability of the stocks or to adequately control adverse impacts on non-fish species. We support management measures that are based on science and are adopted in an open, transparent decision-making process.

The Hawaii longline fishery is managed under two primary sets of regulations: regulations developed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and regulations to implement conservation and management measures by two regional fishery management organizations - the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commissions. Council regulations are developed in a fully open and transparent manner with many opportunities for industry and public inputs. In the international arena, we appreciate that the U.S. Government's process is also very open and includes advisory committees of U.S. fishing and non-fishing interests and frequent meetings of U.S. delegations at the commissions' meetings.

We oppose the prohibition of commercial fishing in the Monuments because -

1. It Is Not Scientifically Supportable: There is no science-based analysis demonstrating that establishment of the Monuments will in any way conserve or protect fish stocks from any real threats. The waters and fish and other animals in these Monuments have not been adversely affected by fishing. These are pristine waters that retain all the characteristics of preserves even as fishing has been going on for years. The fishing that occurred was surface fishing; there was no impact on bottom corals and reefs. One of the claims of the supporters of the monuments has been that the monuments provide a "refuge" for tuna and other migratory species; that is, those fish won't be caught in the U.S. waters and this might somehow help conserve the species. This is a fanciful and illogical argument with no scientific basis. Tuna and associated species typically travel long distances in their migrations across the ocean or parts of the ocean. They are not "residents" dependent on U.S. waters for spawning or growth to reproductive size. They are likely to be caught on the high seas if they are not caught in U.S. waters.

2. It Is Not Necessary: HLA believes that a principle of government should be to take action where existing laws and measures have failed. This is not such a situation. There are no ongoing activities or contemplated activities that are threatening any of the living or non-living resources in the Monuments. There is no ocean mining, there are no activities adversely affecting water or air quality, and there are no activities that would reduce the ocean's ability to absorb carbon dioxide or otherwise buffer against climate change. The only commercial activity in the Monuments has been fishing. This fishing was only by U.S. vessels (foreign fishing is prohibited in U.S. waters) and was fully controlled under existing laws and regulations, including the Magnuson Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and international agreements. It is noteworthy that U.S. regulations in this regard are far more stringent than most foreign regulations, with special controls to protect sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals. No other longline fleet - and there are several, including large

Asian fleets and smaller, Pacific island based fleets - has comparable controls, and it is questionable whether all nations pursue actual enforcement to the degree that the U.S. does. Further, there are existing laws and institutions to deal with any threats that were to arise in the future.

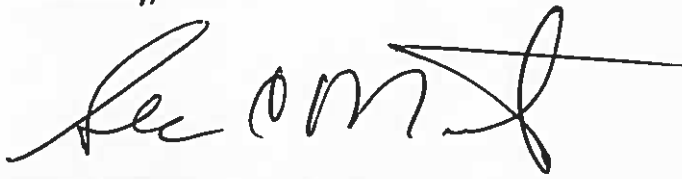
3. It Is Harmful to U.S. Fishing Interests: Hawaii vessels depend on U.S. waters and the adjacent high seas in the Pacific for access to tuna and associated species. In fact, the establishment of the U.S. exclusive economic zone, or EEZ (waters out to 200-mile from shore), was largely driven by the need to protect those U.S. waters and U.S. fisheries from excessive foreign fishing and to provide waters in which U.S. fisheries would operate alone, subject to regulations under the Magnuson Act and other applicable law. Simply put, the intent was to put "America first" in these waters. It simply does not make sense then to force U.S. fishers out of U.S. waters and into more intensely fished high seas. HLA members operate in a very competitive environment. There are many nations fishing for tuna in the Pacific. HLA members provide almost all the fresh tuna and associated species in the market in Hawaii. To the extent the Hawaii fishery is limited, the market is vulnerable to takeover by foreign sources, whose vessels have far less regard for controls to protect fish stocks and non-fish stocks like turtles, mammals, and birds. Establishment of the Monuments means that waters historically accounting for 8 percent of the catch by the Hawaii longline fishery are now closed as part of the Papahānuamākuakea Monument, while waters accounting for another 5-10% of catch are closed around remote Pacific Islands (e.g., Howland-Baker, Palmyra). This has been very disruptive for this fishery.

There also have been adverse impacts on U.S. territories, as monument designations have seriously reduced the potential for fishery development in U.S. territories like American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. These U.S. territories have already been disadvantaged in the past by lack of assistance from the U.S. Government, and now monument designations have put large areas of ocean off limits to U.S. fishing with no conservation benefit. This is truly unfair to the territories.

In closing, HLA recommends that the prohibition of fishing in the monuments be rescinded so that these waters remain open to U.S. fisheries as long as they are consistent with established laws and regulations of the U.S.

HLA appreciates your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Martin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sean Martin, President