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Congress of the United States
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WATER, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES

May 31, 2022

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

I write to express my very strong support for expanding and renaming the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM) as proposed by the Pacific Remote Islands Coalition and others.

Our world's oceans are at mortal risk, a breaking point precipitated by unsustainable overfishing and other resource extraction, debris and land-based pollution, exacerbated and compounded by the devastating and pervasive marine effects of climate change. The solutions to this human-caused crisis are comprehensive and integrated, but include at least the reservation of large portions of our world's oceans and associated environments to ecosystems in their natural form and operation, free of all but a bare minimum of human alteration, able to generate sustainability beyond their borders.

This goal has been increasingly pursued by the countries and peoples of the world, especially those most dependent on healthy and sustainable oceans. They look to the United States to join them and lead by example in actions to protect our oceans which are in scope and extent at least equal to our own presence as a maritime and marine country and our own ability to commit the resources necessary to lead. And our own fellow citizens increasingly understand and support these actions.

The maximum possible expansion of PRIMNM would represent a major contribution by our country to the protection and preservation of our world's oceans, a major example of our own commitment to lead in this critical area for our planet. It would affirm your commitment to tackling the climate crisis at home and abroad. It would further have the specific result of advancing your goal to protect at least 30 percent of America's land and waters by 2030 in an equitable way as outlined in your *America the Beautiful* initiative.

PRIMNM was established on January 6, 2009 by President George W. Bush under the Antiquities Act, and expanded to its current size on September 25, 2014 by President Barack Obama. This further proposed expansion under the Antiquities Act would be the culmination of a bipartisan effort to build off these efforts to protect and preserve the marine environment around Wake, Baker, Howland and Jarvis Islands; Johnston and Palmyra Atolls; and Kingman Reef.

This proposed expansion would fully extend the Monument's boundaries from 50 to 200 nautical miles around these remote and largely uninhabited U.S. possessions to the full extent of the 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone, creating one of the largest highly protected marine protected area in the world. The proposed expansion area is home to thriving wildlife populations including coral, fish, sharks, turtles, rays, whales, dolphins, birds and other invertebrates. Many of these species are endangered or threatened and need to be protected. The wildlife in this area are intricately connected to the nearshore and island ecosystems already within PRIMNM, and an expansion would help ensure that the full ecosystem remains healthy and resilient to the effects of climate change.

PRIMNM is a safe haven for Central Tropical Pacific biodiversity and represents one of the last frontiers of scientific discovery in the world. The deep seabed in the proposed expansion area has 98 seamounts, which are ecological hotspots for biodiversity and remain largely unexplored. With new species being cataloged on every dive, the ocean floor in the expansion area is rich with opportunities for discovery of unique species. We cannot lose this opportunity, if not obligation, to achieve the fullest possible protection.

Additionally, I applaud your administration's commitment to create a working group or commission to evaluate naming practices for marine national monuments and national marine sanctuaries, with a particular emphasis on PRIMNM. Names are an incredibly important part of our identity, and the Monument deserves a name that reflects its significance, history and character. I especially encourage you to engage with Native Hawaiians and other indigenous communities in the Pacific in the renaming process so that the importance of this place can be articulated and deeper connections to this place can be forged. Renaming the monument will help people to connect with it through an understanding of its cultural and historic importance.

Our ocean must be protected for our keiki (children) and for future generations, which why I urge you to use your authority under the Antiquities Act to expand and rename PRIMNM as you move to make your vision for *America the Beautiful* a reality. Expanding PRIMNM would not only protect the marine environment from commercial exploitation but also be a meaningful step towards climate resilience and help preserve one of the last wild and healthy marine ecosystems in the world.

Please be assured that I stand ready in Congress, through my memberships on the Appropriations and Natural Resources Committees, the Pacific Islands Caucus and other means, to provide the fullest possible support of full PRIMNM expansion. I deeply appreciate your consideration of this proposal and my request.

With aloha,



Congressman Ed Case
Hawai'i -First District