

NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE
RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Non-Government (Voting) February 2, 2017

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U.S. Coast Guard

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U.S. Department of Defense

Kitty Simonds
WESPAC

Matt Brown
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Hoku Ka'aekuahiwi-Pousima
NOAA Fisheries PIRO

Mr. John Armor, Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor
Silver Spring, MD 20910

c/o Ms. Athline Clark, Superintendent
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
NOAA/DKIRC
NOS/ONMS/PMNM
1845 Wasp Boulevard, Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818

Subject: Support Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument Management Planning

Aloha mai Director Armor,

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council (RAC) supports the development of a single joint management plan for both the original Monument and the Monument expansion area. The natural and cultural resources of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM or Monument) and the expansion area exist in an ecosystem that must be managed holistically--building on the success of the collaborative co-management that has worked very well over the past decade.

At the RAC's November 16, 2016, quarterly meeting, PMNM Superintendent Ms. Athline Clark provided an in-depth briefing on Presidential Proclamation 9478, Monument expansion, and the way forward for Monument management plan review and potential sanctuary designation. After discussion of the issues presented, the RAC voted unanimously to support the Monument, drafting a single management plan for both the original Monument and Monument expansion areas. In accordance with Proclamation 9478, we urge the Secretary to deem it beneficial to prepare a joint management plan. The natural and cultural resources of the Monument do not recognize an artificial boundary 50 miles offshore and neither should the government agencies responsible for managing those resources.

The RAC also urges the Secretary to ensure the new joint management plan builds on the successes and learns from the challenges to implementing the current management plan. While the current plan is almost 10 years old, most activities described in the plan are still very relevant and worthy of management

attention. The Monument's agencies have done great work in such areas as managing threatened and endangered species, integrating Native Hawaiian cultural practices into Monument management, marine debris removal, education and outreach, and research. The constructive efforts must be continued and integrated into the joint management plan.

Finally, the RAC urges the Secretary to designate the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) as the lead agency in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for managing the Monument expansion area. ONMS has 45 years of experience in place-based management and success in protecting areas of the marine environment with special national significance. The system's 14 sites are all different, yet ONMS has been able to effectively protect these places and make them models of effective, community-based natural and cultural resource conservation.

The council requests that the Director consider forwarding this letter to the new Secretary of Commerce for his review. The NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem RAC appreciates the Secretary's and ONMS's efforts to keep communities and a wide range of constituencies actively involved in the protection of our nation's special marine places.

Sincerely,



Timothy E. Johns
Chair, Reserve Advisory Council