



March 1, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils) are charged under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) with managing, conserving, and utilizing fishery resources throughout the entire Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the United States. In implementing this charge, the Councils are required to take into account the effects of management actions on United States fishermen and fishing communities.

The Council Coordination Committee—which consists of the senior leaders of these Councils—wrote to President Obama in 2016 to raise concerns with the designation of marine monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the effects of those designations on the Nation's fisheries and on domestic fisheries management.

Under the requirements of the MSA, the Councils protect essential fish habitat, minimize bycatch, and comply with protections for species listed under the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and other mandates within the U.S. EEZ. Through implementation of the MSA, the United States is the global leader in the successful conservation and management of fishery resources and associated ecosystems in a proactive sustainable manner. Spatial management, such as the use of marine protected areas, is one of the tools utilized by the Councils. Through the Council process, more than 1,000 individual spatial habitat and fisheries conservation measures have been implemented protecting more than 72 percent of the Nation's ocean waters. The Councils use a public process, in a transparent and inclusive manner, and rely on the best scientific information available as required by the MSA.

As a result, we not only meet conservation objectives but also ensure sustainable seafood for U.S. consumers, promote the economies of coastal communities, and maintain the social-cultural fabric of our Nation's recreational, commercial, and subsistence fishing communities.

Designations of marine national monuments that prohibit fishing have disrupted the ability of the Councils to manage fisheries throughout their range as required by MSA and in an ecosystem-based manner. Our experience with marine monument designations to date is that they are counterproductive to domestic fishery goals, as they have displaced and concentrated U.S. fishing effort into less productive fishing grounds and increased dependency on foreign fisheries that are not as sustainably managed as United States fisheries. The removal of American fishing vessels from U.S. waters eliminates their ability to act as watchdogs over U.S. fishing grounds threatened by foreign fishing and other incursions. For all of these reasons and more, we believe fisheries management decisions should be made through the robust process established by the MSA and successfully used for over forty years to ensure the opportunity for sustainable American fisheries to exist.

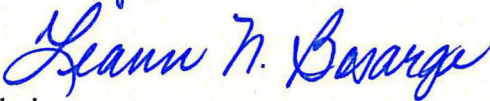
Attached to this letter is a resolution approved by the Council Coordination Committee in 2016 regarding the successes of the MSA. The resolution notes that decisions to close areas of the EEZ through Executive action under authorities such as the Antiquities Act of 1906 may not take into account the MSA statutory requirements to achieve Optimum Yield (OY) from the Nation's fishery resources and may negatively affect domestic fishing jobs and recreational fishing opportunities and undermine the Regional Fishery Management Councils' efforts to develop and implement ecosystem-based management.


America has made significant progress in curbing illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and minimizing our nation's dependence upon seafood imports. We hope you will continue to support our nation's sustainable fisheries and fishing jobs by safeguarding fishery resources in the U.S. EEZ and their management through the MSA.


Respectfully,

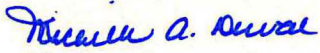

Chair
Caribbean Fishery Management Council



Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

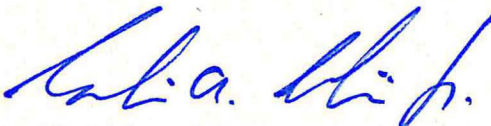

Chair
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council


Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council


Chair
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council


Chair
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council


Chair
New England Fishery Management Council


Chair
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Attachments: CCC 2016 Resolution on Marine National Monuments
Maps of Western Pacific and New England monuments