

Dear Chairman Connaughton,

Date: 10/25/2008

*I wish to express my strong opposition to any and all efforts in designating a National Marine Monument within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Marianas archipelago via the Antiquities Act of 1906 or by Executive Order.*

As a citizen of the United States and resident of the Marianas archipelago, consisting of the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), I hope you realize that the Marianas fishing community continually promotes responsible and sustainable fishing practices which provide for the nutritional needs of our families, as well the rest of the island community.

The people of the Marianas are comprised of a number of family-oriented Pacific Islander cultures, including recognized fishing communities, living peacefully side by side with other mainstream Americans who collectively practice sustainable and responsible fishing. That is, until the Pew Environment Group began their hard sell national monument campaign in the CNMI for a 'no-take' marine protected area covering over one third of the entire CNMI Exclusive Economic Zone. The people of the CNMI have been subjugated to Pew's 'educational program' for the past 10 months; however it was only last week that the people of Guam realized that the entire Marianas Trench, including an area within Guam waters, may be considered for designation of a National Marine Monument.

The monument proposal issue has become extremely controversial in our communities with Pew at the forefront hindering our traditional approach of a community-based decision making process for determining important island issues. These critical issues affect all islanders and must be decided upon based on our time line, not some artificial political deadline.

With this in mind:

**The People of the Marianas Archipelago** desire to keep the CHOICE to commercial and recreationally fish over the ENTIRE Marianas Archipelago Exclusive Economic Zone;

**The People of the Marianas Archipelago** desire to KEEP the present marine resource management authorities of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service; and

**The People of the Marianas Archipelago** desire to keep the CHOICE of exploring options related to oil, gas and mineral extraction over the ENTIRE Marianas Archipelago Exclusive Economic Zone.

With all due respect Mr. Connaughton, please do not take away our cultural rights to sustainably use our natural resources in the manner which we have been doing for thousands of years. These resources belong to the people of the Marianas archipelago and should not be used for the advancement of US mainland politics for an outgoing President.

Sincerely,