



July 2, 2020

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our opposition to your recent proclamation to roll back protections within the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument by lifting the prohibition on commercial fishing. Weakening the protections afforded to our marine national monuments is an unnecessary, unproductive, and unlawful action that undermines our environmental success, slows scientific progress, and will do nothing to help fishermen suffering as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We implore you to reverse course immediately and put back in place all of the protections previously afforded to this unique and vulnerable area, as well as to not take any action in the future seeking to roll back any other national monument, whether in the ocean or on the land.

The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is the first and only national monument in the Atlantic Ocean. It contains underwater canyons that are roughly the same size and scale as the Grand Canyon, and mountains that are higher than any of those east of the Rockies. The spectacular geological features of this setting create a unique biological hotspot with food and habitat for a diverse range of endemic and migratory species. In addition to the endangered North-Atlantic right whale, the canyons and seamounts area is home to multiple species of long-lived, cold-water corals – many of which have been found nowhere else on earth – and innumerate other species that have yet to be discovered. It is a vital foraging and nursery area for dolphins and whales, including the endangered sperm whale. As a protected sanctuary, the monument will increase the resilience of animal populations to the dramatic ocean changes being brought about by climate change. Furthermore, as a living laboratory, the monument serves to help us preserve and understand a small but vital piece of our shared ocean heritage. The singularity of this setting, and its vulnerability to damage from human activity, is precisely why the restrictions on commercial fishing – as well as on all commercial extractive activities – were put in place in the first place and why they must remain in place.

For over a century, American Presidents have used the Antiquities Act to permanently protect some of our nation's most precious environmental, historical, and cultural treasures for future generations. The Act empowers the President to create national monuments and reserve federally owned or controlled lands and waters to protect objects of scientific or historic interest. It does not grant the President the opposite power to revoke those protections. That right is exclusively reserved for Congress. Removing commercial fishing restrictions within the canyons

and seamounts area not only undermines ocean protection off the country's Atlantic coast, but is an illegal action that sets a dangerous precedent that puts other national monuments in jeopardy.

Our country's public lands, waters, and oceans are precious and provide countless benefits to our nation and to our shared global environment. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is just one of five marine monuments nationwide. We must continue to protect all of these special places for the benefit of generations to come, and we urge you to leave all of the protections afforded to these remarkable areas intact.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Richard Blumenthal

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RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate

/s/ Brian Schatz

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BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senate

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley

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JEFFREY A. MERKLEY  
United States Senate

/s/ Dianne Feinstein

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DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
United States Senate

/s/ Martin Heinrich

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MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senate

/s/ Tom Udall

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TOM UDALL  
United States Senate

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy

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CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senate

/s/ Ron Wyden

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RON WYDEN  
United States Senate

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono

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MAZIE K. HIRONO  
United States Senate

/s/ Cory A. Booker

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CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senate

*/s/ Christopher A. Coons*

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CHRISTOPHER A. COONS  
United States Senate

*/s/ Thomas R. Carper*

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THOMAS R. CARPER  
United States Senate

*/s/ Kamala D. Harris*

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KAMALA D. HARRIS  
United States Senate

*/s/ Maria Cantwell*

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MARIA CANTWELL  
United States Senate

*/s/ Jacky Rosen*

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JACKY ROSEN  
United States Senate

*/s/ Patrick Leahy*

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PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senate

*/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto*

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CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO  
United States Senate

*/s/ Richard J. Durbin*

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RICHARD J. DURBIN  
United States Senate

*/s/ Amy Klobuchar*

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AMY KLOBUCHAR  
United States Senate