

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Informational Report 2
November 2016

October 13, 2016

President Barack Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong support for the protection of sensitive deep ocean habitats off the West Coast from oil, gas, and mineral development. As you know, seamounts, deep ocean ridges, and marine canyons are biodiversity hotspots. Many of these areas are unexplored and are home to species currently unknown to science. We applaud the efforts your administration has taken to remove the threats posed by energy development in the deep sea regions of America's Exclusive Economic Zone, and encourage you to pursue similar opportunities in the Pacific, the Arctic, and the Gulf of Mexico.

However, we have significant concerns regarding the current proposal to restrict commercial fishing activity in the waters above certain seamounts and ridges off the coast of California. This proposal entirely bypasses the Pacific Fishery Management Council and does not reflect the input of stakeholders in one of the best managed fisheries in the world. From salmon to Dungeness crab, the West Coast has led the country in bringing fishermen, industry, scientists, policymakers, and concerned citizens together to sustain healthy ecosystems and sustainable harvests. Part of the West Coast's notable success in sustainable fisheries management is a strong commitment to protecting special areas of the ocean, such as in the recent and widely supported expansion of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

The United States has the strongest fisheries management system in the world, and the tools that we bring to bear to manage our living marine resources are unparalleled. While we embrace the conservation values that make seamounts, ocean ridges, and other deep sea habitats so worthy of protection from harmful extractive industry, we urge you to reject any proposal for restrictions on commercial fishing in any deep sea marine monument or conservation area along the coast of California that has not been fully vetted and evaluated in a public and collaborative process such as through the Pacific Fishery Management Council.


Sincerely,



Jackie Speier



Jared Huffman


Julia Brownley


Janice Hahn


Michael M. Honda