



August 11, 2014

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

Dear President Obama,

We, the Ocean Elders, write to you in strong support of your proposal to expand the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument. We urge you to expand the Monument out to the full 200 nautical mile boundary of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to protect one of the world's last remaining pristine marine ecosystems.

Our planet is an ocean planet, and the global ocean has been sending very clear signs that it is in urgent need of greater protection. The threats facing the ocean such as overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and acidification are intensifying and driving dramatic changes in marine ecosystems. With less than one percent of the ocean designated as fully protected, very few areas are safeguarded from these threats. Large and fully protected areas are critical in maintaining the ocean's overall health and resilience, both within country waters and on the high seas.

The western Pacific marine environment is home to some of the most biologically rich tropical waters in the world. The ecosystems of the Pacific Remote Islands provide important habitats for a substantial number of endangered, threatened, or over-exploited species that migrate well beyond the current 50 nautical mile boundary including sea turtles, marine mammals, seabirds, and large predatory fish. Beyond the current Monument boundary, the ecosystem is also rich in deep sea corals and seamounts; areas which act as hotspots of biodiversity not found elsewhere.

We warmly commend the steps that the U.S. and many world leaders took at the State Department's *Our Ocean Summit* to address the challenges facing the ocean. The expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument provides an essential opportunity for the U.S. to demonstrate its commitment to protect ocean health in the region and its leadership in marine conservation in the Pacific and around the world. Expansion of the Monument to the full 200 nautical mile boundary of the U.S. EEZ would nearly double the area of ocean that is fully protected globally, safeguarding this unique ocean ecosystem from the nearshore to the deep sea.

It is not too late to restore the ocean to its former abundance. Your leadership will ensure the protection of one of the richest ecosystems globally. We hope that the expansion of the Monument can serve as an important step toward continuing to protect the ocean for this and future generations.

Sincerely,
Ocean Elders

Her Majesty Queen Noor

Sir Richard Branson

Jackson Browne

James Cameron

Dr. Sylvia Earle

Jose Maria Figueres

Graeme Kelleher

Nainoa Thompson

Captain Don Walsh