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Public comments still sought on marine national monuments in US

The public comment period remains open on the federal review that could result in major changes to five of the US's largest MPAs: the 250,000-km² Marianas Trench Marine National Monument; 12,720-km² Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument; 490,000-km² Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument; 1.5 million-km² Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument; and 34,000-km² Rose Atoll Marine National Monument.

Upon completion of the review, the US Secretary of the Interior will recommend to President Donald Trump whether any changes should be made to each site — from boundary alterations, to reopening of commercial fishing, or even a full overturn of designations. Trump ordered the review in April as part of a larger review of national monument designations (including 21 terrestrial sites) made by prior Presidents under the US Antiquities Act.

Public comments will be accepted before 10 July 2017. To submit your comments, [click here](#).

Comments so far

To view what comments have been received so far, [visit this page](#). A large majority of the comments favor continued protection of the sites.

A search by MPA News on 19 June revealed that more than 29,000 comments have been received regarding the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument alone, and more than 25,000 comments have been received on Papahānaumokuākea (currently the largest protected area in the world). Meanwhile there have been roughly 4000 comments each for the Marianas Trench, Pacific Remote Islands, and Rose Atoll. The similarity in numbers among the last three sites reflects that many of the comments have grouped all three in their messages.

Separately the Marine Conservation Institute has released [a letter signed by more than 500 scientists](#) expressing their support for continuing, or strengthening, current protections in the marine national monuments. More scientists are invited to add their names to the list.

Pacific Environment, a US-based NGO, has launched an [online petition on each of the four Pacific MPAs under review](#), supporting their continued protection.

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