



March 6, 2026

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

Dear President Trump,

We write to express our strong opposition to the elimination of vital protections for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument (Monument) and demand that the administration immediately reverse course. This action is in clear violation of the Antiquities Act of 1906 and will harm a priceless and vital ecosystem meant to be safeguarded for current and future generations.

Established by President Obama under the Antiquities Act and located about 130 miles off the coast of New England, the Monument is the only marine national monument in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean. The Antiquities Act empowers presidents to create national monuments, but it does not provide them with the authority to diminish or revoke monuments.¹ That power remains with Congress.

The Monument is about the size of Connecticut and comprises three undersea canyons – one of which rivals the depth of the Grand Canyon – and four undersea mountains comparable in height to the Appalachians.² The Monument was established to protect this unique undersea environment and the countless species that call it home. The seamounts and canyons are home to deep-sea corals and frequented by endangered whales, sea turtles, tunas, crabs, lobsters, billfish, sharks, seabirds, and so much more. Some of these organisms were first discovered in the Monument. The potential for additional significant ecological exploration of our natural heritage remains.³ Moreover, some of the fragile, deep-sea corals found here are thought to be thousands of years old.⁴ These distinctive characteristics make the Monument a living laboratory and hotbed for scientific research that has led to new deep-sea discoveries about our marine resources. Allowing fishing in this special place could hamper future scientific findings, kill or

¹ Mark Squillace et al, “Presidents Lack the Authority to Abolish or Diminish National Monuments,” *Virginia Law Review* 103 np. 55 (2017): 55, accessed May 12, 2025, <https://virginialawreview.org/articles/presidents-lack-authority-abolish-or-diminish-national-monuments/>.

² “Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument,” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, <https://www.fws.gov/national-monument/northeast-canyons-and-seamounts-marine/about-us>.

³ “Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument,” NOAA Fisheries, last modified May 31, 2024, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/habitat-conservation/northeast-canyons-and-seamounts-marine-national>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

harm rare creatures that are unique to our waters, including some of the oldest living organisms on the planet, and cause irreparable damage to the Monument's seascape.

New Englanders largely favor the establishment of permanently protected ocean areas, but you baselessly justify this proclamation and its devastating environmental impacts by claiming that it will benefit commercial fishermen.⁵ The science suggests otherwise. Multiple studies show that creating well-managed marine protected areas that prohibit fishing has little to no harmful economic impact on commercial fishermen.^{6,7} When your administration opened the Monument for fishing in 2020, 99% of fishing activity still took place outside of the Monument.⁸ In an era where fish stocks are shifting and being depleted, fishing communities need our support more than ever, but selling out the Monument to earn political points does nothing to actually help fishermen. Instead of senselessly allowing commercial fishing in one of our country's most unique places, this administration should fully staff the National Marine Fisheries Service and all other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) programs to ensure fishermen have access to the data needed to sustainably catch the maximum number of fish possible. In that same vein, your administration should support climate research and advance interagency coordination so that stakeholders and relevant management bodies can effectively and efficiently address conflicts caused by shifting fish stocks. Thus far, your administration has gutted NOAA and shuttered climate research – directly harming our nation's fishing community.

Aside from its illegality, reintroducing commercial fishing to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts is a monumental mistake. With no clear benefit for fishermen or any American, it will needlessly risk vital habitats that support ocean health and provide lasting benefits for coastal communities in New England. We implore you to reverse course and immediately reinstate critical protections for this national treasure.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

⁵ Memorandum from Edge Research to Conservation Law Foundation, "New England Public Opinion on the State of the Ocean," May 2023, Conservation Law Foundation, https://www.clf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CLF_2022-New-England-Ocean-Attitudes-Survey_Summary-of-Findings.pdf.

⁶ Lynham, J. Fishing activity before closure, during closure, and after reopening of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. *Sci Rep* **12**, 917 (2022). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-03394-6>.

⁷ Lynham, J., Nikolaev, A., Raynor, J. *et al.* Impact of two of the world's largest protected areas on longline fishery catch rates. *Nat Commun* **11**, 979 (2020), <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-14588-3>.

⁸ Lynham, J. Fishing Activity before closure, during closure, and after reopening of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. *Sci Rep* **12**, 917 (2022). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-03394-6>.



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