

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

August 28, 2016

Dear President Obama:



On behalf of Creation Justice Ministries, I wish to express profound gratitude for using your authority under the Antiquities Act to expand protection for Papahānaumokuākea National Monument. For generations to come, this area's more than 7,000 species, the Native Hawaiians who understand the area to be sacred, and visitors to Hawaii from around the world will benefit from the unmatched leadership you have shown last week, and throughout your presidency, to conserve God's creation.

The beauty and mystery of the oceans are fundamental to the Judeo-Christian religious imagination, beginning with the chaotic waters of Genesis, out of which all life came into being. Your action, together with your Administration's leadership in the world dialogue on care of the ocean, contributes to strengthening our nation's ethic of mindfulness and care for our oceans.

On the West Coast and in Hawaii, this ethic of mindfulness and care for the ocean is deeply ingrained in the culture. On the East Coast, we still have work to do to foster similar attitudes. Given the positive momentum of the expansion of Papahānaumokuākea and the World Oceans Conference coming to Washington, DC, I believe this year is excellent timing to highlight the wonder of God's marine creation in the Atlantic Ocean, which does not yet have any marine monuments.

Creation Justice Ministries, together with religious organizations and many clergy throughout New England, have been very vocal in our effort to protect and raise the profile of New England's Coral Canyons and Seamounts. We co-hosted a public prayer and education event about the monument proposal at Save the Bay in Providence, Rhode Island in March. In addition, many religious leaders have submitted opinion editorials and sent letters of support. We have also been grateful for Senator Blumenthal and the Connecticut delegation's leadership in rallying support for this monument.

Please count on Creation Justice Ministries as a continuing source of strong affirmation of your conservation leadership. As always, you are in our prayers.

Grace and Peace,

Shantha Ready Alonso

Executive Director, Creation Justice Ministries