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Sent Friday, October 15, 2010 8:04 pm

To hihwmanagementplan@noaa.gov

Subject Testimony opposing the expansion of the whale sanctuary

It is a testament to the human spirit that we as a people have been able to correct the errors of generations gone by. The Hawaiian Humpback Whale, by anyone's standard, has made a tremendous recovery since flirting with distinction nearly 60 years ago. Now, as we look at the population of Hawaiian Humpback whales growing at an annual rate of 7% (your numbers) with a population approaching 15,000, it is time to evaluate your mission. I say, congratulations for a job well done. Together, in a partnership with the State of Hawaii, (co-manager of the HHHWMS) you have helped to bring the Hawaiian Humpback Whale back to sustainable numbers. You have accomplished your mission and it is now time to relinquish your authority over to the State of Hawaii.

This is not the time for you to interpret this success as an opportunity to expand your authority to other species or habitats that you believe need your protection. We do not need nor can we afford redundant federal regulation given the fact that we already have the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammals Act (both Federal Laws enacted by Congress) to protect our treasured resources.

In addition, On June 16, 2006 President Bush, by Presidential Proclamation, created the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. PMNM the single largest conservation area under the U.S. flag, and one of the largest marine conservation areas in the world. It encompasses 139,797 square miles of the Pacific Ocean (105,564 square nautical miles) - an area larger than all the country's national parks combined.

The extensive coral reefs found in Papahānaumokuākea - truly the rain forests of the sea - are home to over 7,000 marine species, one quarter of which are found only in the Hawaiian Archipelago. Many of the islands and shallow water environments are important habitats for rare species such as the threatened green sea turtle and the endangered Hawaiian monk seal.

I would respectfully ask that you consider transferring full management over to the State of Hawaii and re-allocating our taxpayer dollars into areas that truly need help - Perhaps Education.

Yours truly,

Mark Oyama

