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## Buyouts offer boost to marine preserve

Hawai'i officials must seize the unprecedented opportunity to preserve environmental resources offered by the creation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument.

The most recent advantage comes through a smart move by the Pew Charitable Trusts to assemble compensation packages for the eight holders of bottomfishing permits. It would benefit commercial fishing stakeholders who would give up permits ahead of the current five-year deadline, enabling fuller environmental recovery to start now.

The terms seem fair. Pew would require all eight to participate in the agreement, and would base compensation on catch history and fishing income.

Meanwhile, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council wants to see some commercial fishing in the protected zone, a counterintuitive notion for an area the public hopes to keep pristine. And it would set a enforcement challenge that would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet.

For starters, guarding against environmental damage from fishing activities is not only a matter of catch regulation. Already, an alien seaweed that has threatens reefs has spread to Necker Island. That contamination must be contained, and continued exposure to such incursions only worsens the risk.

It remains for the state to develop a policy that fosters sustainable fisheries for the long term — a policy that by necessity would require a conservationist approach.

[Back](#)

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