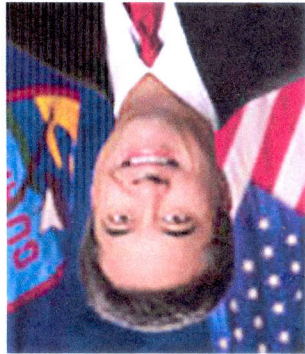


# 'Marianas monument plan must have community input'

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GUAM and the CNMI must be consulted on the White House's plan to designate several Pacific atolls and reefs as marine sanctuaries under th



e proposed Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Gov. Felix P. Camacho said yesterday. "We fully support conservation efforts, but in doing so we must consider the far reaching effects and take the appropriate time to hear from the stakeholders who will be affected," Camacho stated in a letter to James L. Connaughton, chairman of the Council of Environmental Quality.

"I believe that the management of cultural, economic and environmental resources should be conducted in an open and inclusive manner for all the residents of Guam and the Mariana Islands," the governor added.

The monument proposal, modeled on the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, is being hailed as the largest ocean conservation effort in history and touted as Bush's "blue legacy."

Besides the Mariana Trench, the proposed monument would also cover the waters around Rose Atoll in American Samoa and various islands and reefs in the central Pacific that are under U.S. jurisdiction, that scientists want to observe.

Noting that the Marianas Trench has a "high strategic military value" for the mission of the Department of Defense, Camacho told Connaughton that the designation of a monument without complete assessment of DOD operations and procedures "would compromise the protection and conservation of marine resources."

Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo earlier wrote to Connaughton, opposing the proposed monument, which is also being challenged by the CNMI government and Guam fishermen.