

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 337**

### ***Creating a Marine Sanctuary Study Group***

**WHEREAS**, Palau is blessed to have a diverse and vibrant marine environment; and

**WHEREAS**, our marine environment is our birthright and is what makes Palau unique in the world; and

**WHEREAS**, the marine environment is also the basis for the livelihood of our people and for our national economy; and

**WHEREAS**, foreign fishing vessels have fished in Palau's waters for many years, making millions from selling Palau's tuna to consumers overseas; and

**WHEREAS**, Palau does not receive sufficient compensation from the sale of its tuna, considering the high and increasing value of these fish in the market, and the impact that these vessels have on our fish stocks; and

**WHEREAS**, Palau is a worldwide leader in conservation, with numerous laws and initiatives that protect our environment for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Palau has designated itself as a "Shark Sanctuary" and the protections given to sharks have not only benefitted the species, but also Palau's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, considering that all species in the ocean are interconnected and interdependent, Palau is presently considering a total ban on all foreign commercial fishing in Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and

**WHEREAS**, more study is needed to ensure that the ban can be done in an enforceable, effective, and economically viable way;

**NOW THEREFORE**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the Republic of Palau, pursuant to the Constitution and applicable laws of the Republic, it is hereby ordered that the Marine Sanctuary Study Group is hereby created as follows:

1. Membership of the Group. The Group shall be composed of the following members:

- Minister of Natural Resources, Environment, and Tourism, who shall be the Chairperson of the Group;
- Mr. Noah Idechong, Special Advisor to the Minister of Natural Resources, Environment, and Tourism on fisheries issues;
- Minister of Finance;
- Director of the Bureau of Oceans and Fishery Management;
- Chief of Staff to the President;
- A Representative from the Nature Conservancy;
- A Representative from the Chamber of Commerce; and
- A Representative from the Belau Tourism Authority.

2. Duties and Functions. The Marine Sanctuary Study Group shall have the following duties and functions:

- A) To study and make recommendations on the methods that the Republic may utilize to impose a ban on foreign commercial fishing in the EEZ;
- B) To determine the overall economic impact to the Republic of imposing a ban on foreign commercial fishing in the EEZ;
- C) To study and make recommendations on methods to enforce the foreign commercial fishing ban in the EEZ; and
- D) To explore and make recommendations on options to help offset the economic loss caused by the ban on foreign commercial fishing and the cost of enforcement;

The Marine Sanctuary Study Group shall issue a Final Report to the President which shall address in detail the aforementioned issues. The Report should be issued as soon as practicable, but in no instance later than 180 days from the date of this Order.

3. Administrative Support. Administrative support to the Marine Sanctuary Study Group shall be provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism and other government agencies as deemed necessary.
4. Meetings. The Study Group shall meet at least two times each month. The initial meeting of the Study Group shall be called by the Chairperson and shall be held within fifteen days of the signing of this Order. Further meetings shall be called by the Chairperson.
5. Term of the Committee. The Study Group shall continue in existence until rescinded by Executive Order.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2013, in the State of Koror, Republic of Palau.

/s/

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Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.  
President of the Republic of Palau