

SPEAK UP FOR OUR SHARED OCEAN

A guide to making a public submission on the Eastern High Seas Pocket deep-sea mining application.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CLOSE

3 August 2026

01 Why this matters

BACKGROUND

A US company has applied to mine the deep seabed in the **Eastern High Seas Pocket**, an area of the high seas between Kiribati, the Cook Islands and French Polynesia.

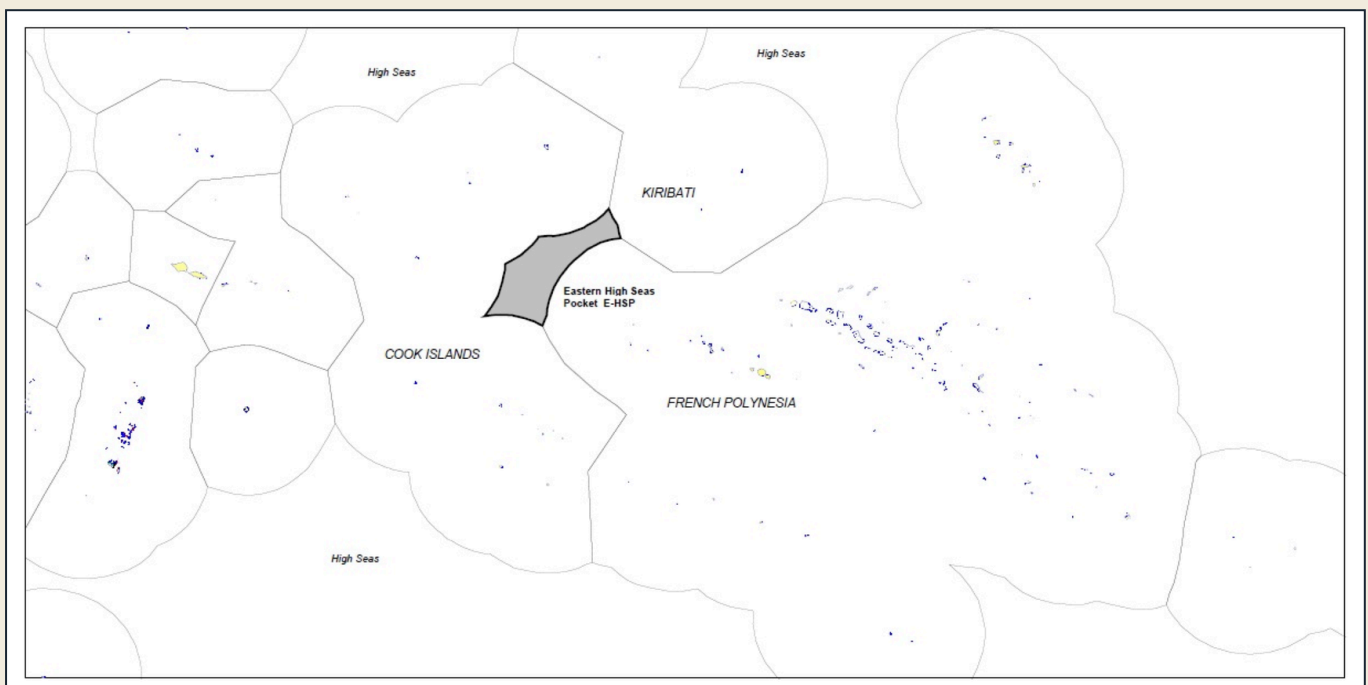
This application is being considered through a US domestic licensing process, while governments are still negotiating the international rules for deep-sea mining through the International Seabed Authority (ISA). Because the proposed mining site lies in the high seas, the decision has implications beyond any one country.

The Pacific Ocean is one connected ecosystem. Ocean currents, migratory species and marine ecosystems do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries, meaning activities in one area can have wider consequences across our shared ocean.

This public consultation is an opportunity for Pacific voices – and those who stand in solidarity with the Pacific – to contribute to the official record before a decision is made.

02 What is the Eastern High Seas Pocket?

CONTEXT



MAP Location of the Eastern High Seas Pocket (E-HSP). The shaded area lies beyond national jurisdiction, between the waters of Kiribati, the Cook Islands and French Polynesia.

The Eastern High Seas Pocket is an area of international waters located between Kiribati, the Cook Islands and French Polynesia. Unlike a country’s Exclusive Economic Zone, the high seas lie beyond national jurisdiction.

That is why governance of activities such as deep-sea mining is being negotiated internationally through the International Seabed Authority.

03 Why PICAN is concerned

POSITION

PICAN believes activities with the potential to cause significant environmental harm should be guided by:

- The precautionary principle

■ Transparent decision-making

■ Respect for multilateral governance
- The best available science

■ Strong international cooperation

■ Meaningful consideration of Pacific perspectives

Proceeding with domestic licensing while international negotiations remain underway raises important questions about how activities in the global commons should be governed.

04 How to make a submission

TAKE ACTION

Submitting a comment is simple, and it does not need to be technical. A thoughtful submission explaining why this issue matters to you can make an important contribution.

01 Open the submission page using the link or QR code below.	02 Read the consultation information.	03 Write your submission in your own words.	04 Submit before 3 August 2026.
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MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION AT

U.S. Federal Register

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/06/02/2026-10975/deep-seabed-mining-notice-of-receipt-of-application-for-deep-seabed-mining-exploration-licenses-and>

For questions or assistance, email secretariat@pican.org



05 Find your voice

FOUR WAYS IN

There is no single “right” way to write your submission. Choose one or two perspectives that resonate with you and write in your own words.

A Ocean protection

YOU MIGHT FOCUS ON

- The Pacific Ocean is one connected ecosystem.
- Ocean currents, biodiversity and fisheries do not stop at political boundaries.
- The deep sea remains one of Earth's least understood ecosystems.
- Scientific uncertainty calls for precaution.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD RAISE

- ▶ Has enough science been gathered to understand the environmental risks?
- ▶ How will impacts beyond the proposed mining site be assessed?
- ▶ How will cumulative impacts be considered?

B International cooperation & ocean governance

YOU MIGHT FOCUS ON

- The proposed mining area lies beyond national jurisdiction.
- Governments are still negotiating international rules through the International Seabed Authority.
- Decisions affecting the high seas should strengthen, not undermine, multilateral cooperation.
- International governance exists because the high seas are a shared global commons.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD RAISE

- ▶ How does this application relate to ongoing ISA negotiations?
- ▶ Could this decision affect confidence in international ocean governance?
- ▶ How does this process support transparent multilateral decision-making?

C Pacific communities

YOU MIGHT FOCUS ON

- Pacific peoples have deep cultural, spiritual and economic relationships with the ocean.
- Healthy oceans underpin fisheries, food security and livelihoods.
- Pacific voices deserve meaningful consideration in decisions affecting the Pacific.
- Pacific civil society has consistently called for a precautionary approach.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD RAISE

- ▶ How have Pacific communities been consulted?
- ▶ How will fisheries and food security be protected?
- ▶ How will Pacific knowledge inform decision-making?

D Future generations & climate justice

YOU MIGHT FOCUS ON

- Decisions made today will shape the ocean inherited by future generations.
- The high seas should be protected for present and future generations.
- The ICJ's Advisory Opinion on Climate Change reaffirmed that States must prevent significant environmental harm, exercise due diligence and protect the environment for present and future generations.
- These principles are relevant to activities with potentially irreversible impacts on the global commons.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD RAISE

- ▶ How have future generations been considered?
- ▶ How has due diligence been demonstrated?
- ▶ How does this proposal align with obligations to prevent significant environmental harm?
- ▶ How will decision-makers account for scientific uncertainty?

A NOTE ON THE ICJ ADVISORY OPINION

The opinion addresses States' obligations under international law in relation to climate change. While it does not specifically address deep-sea mining, its principles – prevention of environmental harm, due diligence, and protection of the environment for present and future generations – offer an important lens for considering decisions affecting the global commons.

KEY MESSAGES

If you're unsure where to begin, these are the core messages PICAN encourages people to consider.

- The Pacific Ocean is one connected ecosystem.
- Decisions should be guided by science and the precautionary principle.
- Pacific voices deserve meaningful consideration.
- The high seas are part of our shared global commons.
- International cooperation should remain at the centre of high seas governance.
- Future generations deserve a healthy and resilient ocean.

06 Before you submit

CHECKLIST

- ☒ Write in your own words.
- ☒ Be respectful and constructive.
- ☒ Submit before 3 August 2026.
- ☒ Choose the issues that matter most to you.
- ☒ Explain why this matters from your perspective.

OUR SHARED OCEAN. OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

The Pacific Ocean connects us all. Whether your submission is grounded in science, governance, Pacific values, or concern for future generations, your voice can help strengthen the call for precaution, accountability and the protection of our shared ocean.

COMMENTS CLOSE

3 AUGUST 2026

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Make your submission before 3 August 2026 / federalregister.gov