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On June 16, President Obama announced his commitment to expand federal protection of the ocean near the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument in the southern Pacific Ocean. The area contains coral reefs and associated ecosystems that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and ocean acidification. The proposal would make it the world's largest marine sanctuary, doubling the global amount of fully protected ocean.

The move has garnered criticism from some Republican lawmakers, including Representative Doc Hastings, who argue that the expansion signifies extreme federal overreach that will restrict valuable economic activities such as recreation, fishing, and energy production.

The Obama administration will be seeking input from fishermen, scientists, conservationists, and other stakeholders as they determine the details of the expansion and its geographic scope. The proposal is part of an ongoing effort to promote marine conservation in U.S. and international waters.

Sources: New York Times, Washington Post, White House Office of the Press Secretary
