

The People of American Samoa Stand Against Deep-sea Mining

April 28, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned community members of American Samoa, write to express our strong opposition to deep-sea mining proceeding in national and international waters. We are united in standing with former Governor, Lemanu P.S. Mauga, who has taken a clear and commendable position against deep-sea mining by placing a moratorium on all deep-sea mining activities in our territory ([source](#)).

Last year, we came together to make it clear to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management that we oppose Impossible Metals' unsolicited lease request to explore the seafloor for mineral extraction near our islands. Even though our community has already expressed clear opposition to the exploitation of our resources by Impossible Metals, the company has decided to make another lease request. Again, we oppose this attempt to exploit the natural resources of our islands, especially by a company who has clear disregard for our consent.

Our opposition is rooted not only in our deep cultural and spiritual connection to the ocean—which is essential to our way of life and identity—but also in serious concerns regarding the national security, economic, and environmental implications of deep-sea mining.

As Pacific Islanders and U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents, we are deeply alarmed by the potential for deep-sea mining to create new geopolitical vulnerabilities. By issuing permits for the potential commercial recovery of seabed minerals in international waters, this could open the door to a race for control over ocean resources by foreign powers. These contracts could allow China—and potentially other actors—to extract not just minerals, but also critical maritime data that could be used for military or surveillance purposes. Deep-sea mining could provide economic and geostrategic footholds to actors whose long-term goals may not align with American values or interests. Weakening the commitment to the stewardship of international waters, or the territorial waters of the countries located closest to American Samoa, undermines our collective security.

Deep sea ecosystems remain among the least studied and understood places on the planet and support vital ocean ecosystem elements such as fish stocks, coral reefs, and ecosystem functions. Not only do the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining threaten the health of these ecosystems and our fisheries, but opening up this frontier for commercial exploitation for minerals at a time of growing opposition from the international community against the industry [[source](#)] will undermine the ability for the U.S. to demand compliance from other states in areas like illegal fishing, which remains one of the most significant threats to our economy, food security, and maritime sovereignty in American Samoa.

American Samoan families depend on healthy fisheries. Our food security and our livelihoods depend on our ability to catch fish, especially tuna, in our territory's waters. Research has shown that deep-sea mining could have serious impacts on commercially significant fisheries, such as tuna ([source](#)). Whether it is in our territory's waters, federal waters, or international waters, the potential impacts of deep-sea

mining on fisheries, including tuna, puts the livelihoods, economies, and well-being of many at risk. This is why seafood businesses and associations, including the Global Tuna Alliance and the Sustainable Seafood Coalition, have already expressed their opposition to deep-sea mining ([source](#)).

Introducing a destructive extractive industry such as deep-sea mining for speculative and short-term economic gain, at best, endangers the long-term viability of American Samoa's largest economic sectors, fisheries and tourism. The lives and livelihoods of American Samoans could be sacrificed for companies owned by foreign nationals who file taxes abroad.

We are asking the U.S. Government to put the rights and interests of its own citizens, nationals, and permanent residents in American Samoa first. **We do not consent to the commercialization of our seafloor, especially by companies that have neither engaged with our communities nor secured our free, prior, and informed consent.**

We urge federal agencies and all decision-makers to oppose the advancement of deep-sea mining, reject Impossible Metals' lease request, and respect the decisions of the Government of American Samoa and the will of our people. We respect and value our home as our ancestors did and hope to leave a better place for our future generations. Our future, our culture, and our economic resilience depend on the protection of our ocean—not its destruction.

Signed by,

Organizations (12)

Coral Reef Advisory Group	One Ocean, One People
350 Pacific Queensland	People of American Samoa
Pacific Climate Warriors - Te Whanganui-a-Tara	Pasefika Presence
Folauga ole Tatau ma Iaga Aganuu Faasamoa	CNMI Diaspora Community Fund
LEO Club of SPA	E Rea Consulting Limited
Neil's Ace Home Center	DWMR

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14. Dr. Crystal Simanu
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76. Juni
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78. Julia Hope
79. Anonymous
80. Mary Harm
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82. Anonymous
83. Anonymous
84. Mekiraeanna Taumoepeau
85. Sava'auli S Suluai
86. Pemerika Mahuka