

the full range of complex and important interests in matters related to California water.

NOTE: S. 612, approved December 16, was assigned Public Law No. 114–322.

## Statement on the 80th Birthday of Pope Francis *December 16, 2016*

As he marks his 80th birthday tomorrow, I join the American people in extending our best wishes to His Holiness Pope Francis. In both word and deed, Pope Francis has inspired people around the world with his message of compassion, hope, and peace. He has called on us to see ourselves in one another, reach out to those who are at the margins of society, extend mercy, and care for the planet we all share. It was my great honor to wel-

come His Holiness to the White House last year and to work together on common causes. I remain especially grateful for his invaluable support for our work to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba, which I announced on December 17, 2 years ago. Guided by his humble example, may the people of the world move forward together toward true justice and peace for all God’s children.

## Statement on Signing the Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act *December 16, 2016*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 6452, the “Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act,” which implements the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean, and the amendments to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. I recommended that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of all of these treaties because they will help promote sound fishery management; enable us to better combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; and prevent destructive fishing practices and contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources on the high seas. I appreciate the efforts of the Congress to ensure that the United States can contribute to these international efforts.

The bill provides that the United States will be represented on the North Pacific Fisheries Commission by five commissioners—two appointed by the President, and the three chair-

persons of the North Pacific, Pacific, and Western Pacific Fishery Management Councils, who are selected by the members of those Councils. Because the commissioners have the authority to speak on behalf of the United States before an international body, they are diplomatic officers. The Constitution grants the President the exclusive authority to represent and to decide who else will represent the United States in foreign relations. Allowing the regional fishery management chairpersons to represent the United States on the North Pacific Fisheries Commission would raise constitutional concerns. The executive branch will develop an approach to treat this provision of the statute in a manner that mitigates the constitutional concerns while adhering closely to the intent of the Congress.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
December 16, 2016.

NOTE: H.R. 6452, approved December 16, was assigned Public Law No. 114–327.