



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SEAFOOD RESILIENCE AND COMPETITIVENESS - DRAFT ANNOTATED OUTLINE

Introduction

The seafood industry in the United States is facing unprecedented concurrent challenges: market and trade disruptions caused by the coronavirus epidemic; accelerating changes in ocean conditions due to climate change causing rapid changes in species location, size, and composition and, the effect of “new technologies” such as offshore wind energy on the use of ocean space; and need to attract investment to replace ageing harvest, processing, and distribution infrastructure.

Produced responsibly, as it is in the United States, seafood is good for people, good for the economy, and good for the planet. Seafood, wild and farmed, is one of the best sources of nutrients essential for human well-being. Wild harvest and ocean farming of seafood are critical to providing protein to a growing global population. Sustainable seafood production is also an environmentally efficient way to produce food given its relatively low carbon footprint and efficient use of resources and is increasingly a critical part of food systems designed to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. The U.S. seafood industry is not only critical to our food system, it supported 1.2 million jobs and generated \$165 billion in sales in seafood and across the broader economy in 2018¹.

Although the coronavirus pandemic forced many restaurants to close or reduce operations during the past two years, American consumers are buying more seafood than ever at supermarkets. While the pandemic saw increases in seafood consumption, the increase was met primarily by imported seafood. U.S. producers and seafood communities did not fare as well. The market and supply chain disruptions caused by the coronavirus led to a precipitous loss of revenue for U.S. seafood producers in 2020.² While U.S. seafood production has rebounded somewhat in 2021, signs of recovery are not uniform. In addition, the coronavirus market and international trade disruptions highlighted the need for industry to modernize or expand domestic production, processing, cold storage, and markets.

Because the U.S. seafood industry has a such critical role to play in enhancing public health and nutrition, creating jobs (especially in rural and disadvantaged communities), and serving as a key part of a climate resilient food strategy, ***NOAA Fisheries and the Secretary of Commerce are seeking seafood industry, Tribal, and other stakeholder and public input on actions for consideration*** on how to deploy the agency’s full array of authorities and capabilities to help rebuild and enhance the competitiveness of the seafood and fishing industry and associated communities. In particular, the agency is seeking input on the activities outlined below that may form the basis of a ***National Seafood Strategy***. The Strategy will focus on actions that NOAA can accomplish over a five-year period given current capabilities. The list of goals and objectives below is provisional and designed to invite comment. Reviewers may wish to highlight other priorities.

¹ See Fisheries Economics of the United States 2018. US Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-F/SPO-225. November 2021. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/fisheries-economics-united-states-report-2018>. <accessed on 7 January 2022>

² See US Seafood Industry and For-Hire Sector Impacts from COVID-19: 2020 in Perspective. US Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-F/SPO-221, November 2021. <https://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/content/tech-memo/us-seafood-industry-and-hire-impacts-covid-19-2020-perspective>. <accessed on 7 January 2022>



1: Wild Capture Fisheries

Goal: Optimize sustainable production of U.S. wild-capture seafood

Objective 1.1: Fisheries Management: Continue engaging with Regional Fishery Management Councils to rebuild fish stocks, prevent overfishing, and implement regulatory changes that streamline or increase efficiency for fisheries stakeholders, subsistence fishing, and fishing communities.

Objective 1.2: Fisheries Science: Maintain stock assessments and adjust surveys to account for changing ocean and climatic conditions and implement Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management approaches to fisheries management, and the agency's Climate and Fisheries Initiative.

Objective 1.3. Fisheries and the Blue Economy: Work with the seafood industry, federal agencies, states, Tribes, and other stakeholders to enable the commercial fishing industry and communities to adapt and thrive in a growing ocean economy that includes offshore wind energy installations, endangered species mandates, marine protected areas, and other ocean uses.

Objective 1.4. Habitat Restoration in Support of Fisheries: Restore habitat critical to fisheries (e.g., spawning grounds, fish passages) while also helping to protect coastal seafood infrastructure from storm damage and sea level rise (e.g., living shorelines such as marsh habitat and oyster reefs).

2. Aquaculture

Goal: Increase Domestic Aquaculture Production and Establish the U.S. as a Global Leader in Sustainable Aquaculture

Objective 2.1: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas. Complete the Gulf and Southern California Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOAs) and begin work on two or three additional AOA (areas currently under consideration include Alaska and Florida state waters and the Pacific Islands).

Objective 2.2: Aquaculture Science. Expand NOAA's aquaculture science capabilities and partnerships in support of a) the agency's permit consultations with other federal agencies and b) research and development with universities and the private sector to advance science-based marine aquaculture

Objective 2.3. National Aquaculture Development Plan. Work with the Administration and the agencies represented on the federal interagency Subcommittee on Aquaculture along with the seafood industry, Tribal Nations, and interested stakeholders to complete and publish a new National Aquaculture Development Plan.

Objective 2.4: National Marine Aquaculture Legislation: Work with Congress and aquaculture harvesting communities to establish a clear regulatory framework for aquaculture in federal waters and to expand an R&D program for all marine aquaculture.

3. International Trade

Goal: Fair, reciprocal, and sustainable seafood trade

Objective 3.1: Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. Make full use of current authorities and coordination mechanisms, such the Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement (Maritime SAFE) Act and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, to combat and reduce IUU fishing worldwide.



Objective 3.2: National Trade Policy. Provide assistance to the Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration and the Office of the US Trade Representative to design and implement a National Trade Policy for the seafood industry and Tribal Nations.

Objective 3.3: Access to Foreign Markets. Expand access to foreign markets for U.S. seafood products by working with the International Trade Administration, USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service, and other agencies.

4. Seafood Promotion, Infrastructure and Workforce Development

Goal: Strengthen the entire seafood sector through collaborative marketing, infrastructure modernization, and workforce development

Objective 4.1 Seafood Marketing and Promotion: Work with the seafood industry, Congress, and others to implement a National Seafood Council, and amplify FishWatch and social media messaging to convey the nutritional value and sustainability of U.S. seafood.

Objective 4.2. Seafood Infrastructure. Provide technical assistance and grant resources to help to modernize U.S. seafood infrastructure and supply chain components (e.g., Tribal hatcheries, port and dock facilities, processing, cold storage, working waterfronts, information technology, and seafood production research and development) to strengthen and enhance opportunities for coastal seafood communities and regional food economies.

Objective 4.3 Workforce Development. Work with the National Sea Grant College Program, other federal agencies, Tribal, State, and local agencies, schools, and others to expand seafood industry workforce development, training, and extension programs to foster a growing and diverse seafood workforce.

Objective 4.4 Market, Economic, and Social Impact Analysis. Conduct market, trade, and socioeconomic analyses to: a) understand potential effects of climate change, market developments, and external shocks like the coronavirus on the industry, Tribes, coastal communities, and fisheries management; and b) to identify opportunities to expand domestic and export markets for U.S. seafood.