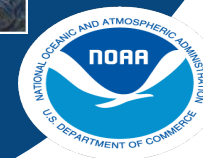
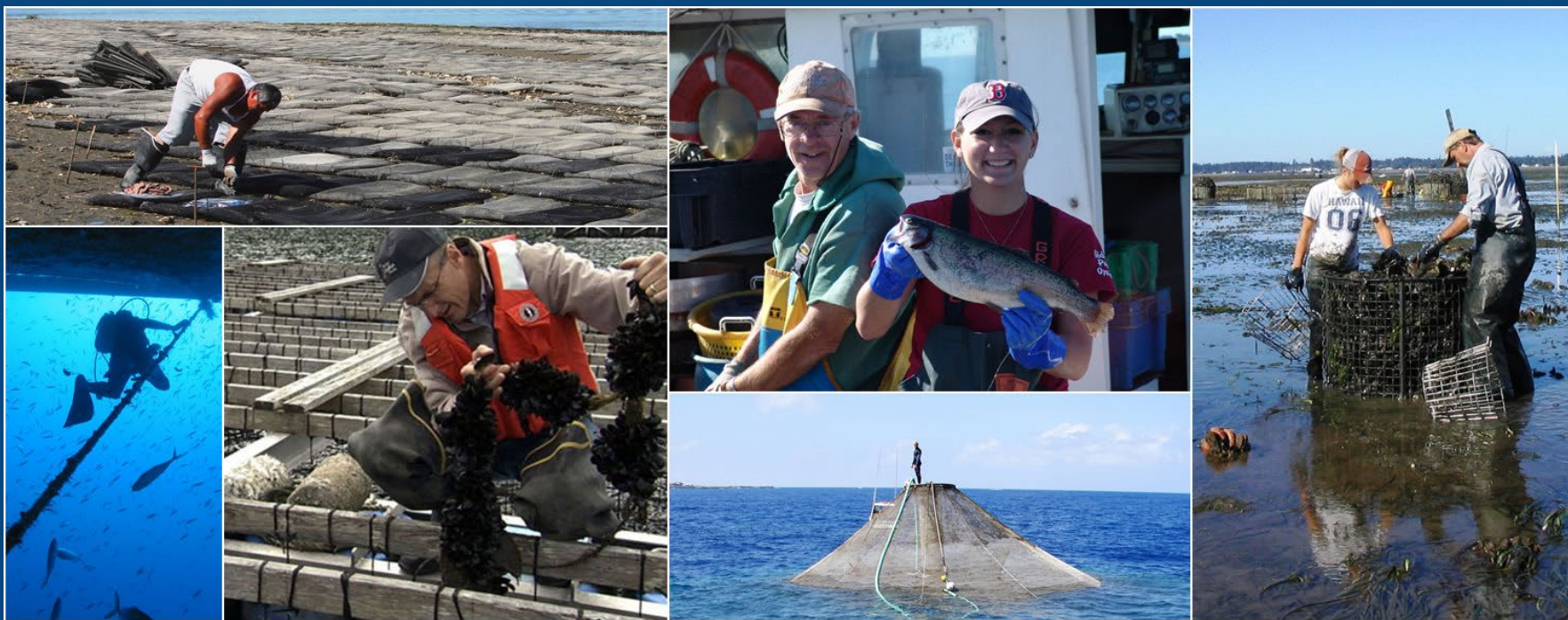


NOAA Fisheries Aquaculture Opportunity Area Updates

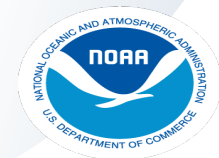


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Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Section 7: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas

- The Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with other appropriate Federal officials, appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, and in coordination with appropriate State and tribal governments, shall:
 - Within 1 year of date of E.O., identify at least two geographic areas containing locations suitable for commercial aquaculture.
 - Within 2 years of identifying each geographic area, complete a PEIS for each to assess the impact of siting aquaculture facilities there.
 - Each of following 4 years, identify two more geographic areas and complete PEIS within 2 years.

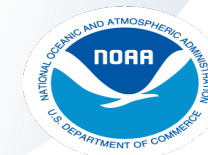


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Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Year 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7
I.D. 2 AOAs*	Complete PEIS* for each AOA					
	I.D. 2 AOAs	Complete PEIS for each AOA				
		I.D. 2 AOAs	Complete PEIS for each AOA			
			I.D. 2 AOAs	Complete PEIS for each AOA		
				I.D. 2 AOAs	Complete PEIS for each AOA	

*AOAs = Aquaculture Opportunity Areas
PEIS = Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements



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Aquaculture Opportunity Area Timeline



SUMMER 2020

1

Select regions for areas for evaluation. Convene NOAA AOA Teams.

2

Announce selected regions to regulatory partners, stakeholders, and general public.

3

National Center for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) compiles siting data for the first two regions (ongoing).

4

Outreach to fishery management councils, marine fisheries commissions, stakeholders, and the public.

Aquaculture Opportunity Area Timeline



FALL 2020

1

Publish Request for Information (RFI) to gather public input.

2

Continue outreach and engagement to stakeholder groups.

3

Host five public listening sessions and review submitted RFI comments.

4

Using best available data, NCCOS conducts siting analysis to find areas that may support sustainable aquaculture development.

Aquaculture Opportunity Area Timeline



WINTER 2020/SPRING 2021

1

NCCOS drafts an Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas to present maps and share the results of their siting analysis.

2

Combine results of draft Atlas with RFI public input to select areas in the Gulf of Mexico and Southern California to evaluate in more depth during the NEPA process.

3

Consider information collected through RFI, including industry interest, state agency input, and ecosystem factors to begin selection of regions to assess for possible future AOAs.

4

Continue outreach for current and future AOA efforts.

Aquaculture Opportunity Area Timeline



LATE SUMMER/FALL 2021

1

Publish Atlases as peer reviewed NOAA tech memos for each region.

2

Publish Notice of Intent (NOI) for each programmatic EIS in the Gulf of Mexico and Southern California, beginning in-depth evaluation of potential areas.

3

Continue to coordinate with other federal agencies, Fishery Management Councils, Marine Fisheries Commissions, states, and tribes.

4

Announce selection of next region(s) of focus for AOA identification using best available scientific data and stakeholder input.

Comment Summary

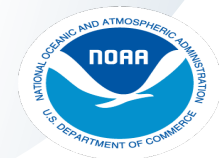
- Comments closed December 22, 2020
- 73 unique comment submissions through regulations.gov; 24 from five public listening sessions
- A mix of Federal and State agencies, Councils, Makah Tribe, NGOs, individuals submitted comments
- Two write-in campaigns
 - Friends of the Earth - 27,368 signatures
 - Center for Food Safety - 6,519 signatures



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Comment Details

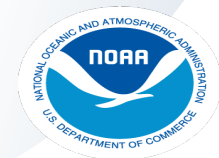
- Mix of support and opposition
- Opposition primarily focused on finfish aquaculture
- Specific areas within Southern CA and Gulf of Mexico to focus on or avoid
- Issues raised (e.g. water quality, marine mammals, impacts to fishing markets, escapes, disease) to be considered in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)



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Next Steps: AOAs 1 & 2

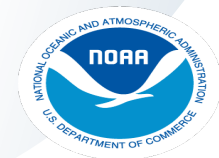
- Southeast and West Coast regions will complete PEISs for first AOAs
 - Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare each PEIS expected late summer/fall 2021
- Areas considered in PEISs will be based on NCCOS Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas, coordination with Protected Resources, Sustainable Fisheries, and Habitat Conservation, public comment



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Comments on Future AOA locations

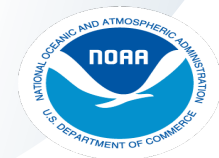
- Support for AOA for shellfish and seaweed mariculture in Alaska (state and federal waters)
- Support for AOA in Western Pacific
- Support for AOA in USVI and Puerto Rico (through public meeting)
- Support for AOA in waters off of Florida
- Primarily opposition for AOA in Northeast at this time
 - Potential conflicts with wind planning, lobster industry, right whales
 - One comment in support of AOA in Northeast
- Opposition for AOA in Oregon at this time
- Opposition for AOA in coastal Washington (Makah Tribe)



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Next Steps: Future AOAs

- Review comments
- Work with Regional Offices to define opportunities and challenges of AOAs in their region
- NMFS Leadership consideration of opportunities and challenges, including resource limitations
- Decision on next steps



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Coordination and Engagement with the Councils

- Close coordination with the Councils has been and will be essential as we work to establish AOAs
- National initiative; NMFS regional offices lead PEIS development



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Regional Coordination with Councils

- NMFS region & NCCOS coordination with Council:
 - When NCCOS is gathering data for spatial analysis
 - During public comment for Request for Information (RFI)
 - When NCCOS Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas is published
 - When Notice of Intent to prepare PEIS publishes with preliminary alternatives
 - When draft PEIS publishes for public comment
 - When final PEIS publishes to present selected alternative(s)



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National Coordination with Councils or CCC

- National coordination on general process or future AOA's
- HQ or NCCOS updates at CCC meetings
- Presentations to Councils as requested, by regional office or HQ



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nmfs.aquaculture.info@noaa.gov



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