

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We write to urge the inclusion of support for the American seafood industry in the next coronavirus relief measure. Our seafood processors and fishermen have been dealt a significant economic blow as a result of coronavirus and are in desperate need of federal assistance.

The seafood industry is critical to local and regional economies across the country. In 2016, the industry supported over one million good-paying jobs and generated more than \$144 billion in sales, adding an estimated \$61 billion to the nation's GDP. In addition to the jobs, families, and communities it supports along every part of our country's coastlines, the seafood industry fuels jobs throughout the country in processing and distribution.

Due to efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which has led to a near total shutdown of restaurants and other outlets serving fresh seafood, the supply chain of fishermen and seafood processors has been decimated. Notably, more than 68% of the \$102.2 billion that consumers paid for U.S. fishery products in 2017 was spent at food service establishments. It has been reported that many of the nation's fisheries have suffered sales declines as high as 95 percent. In addition, while many other agricultural sectors have seen a significant increase in grocery sales, seafood has been left out of that economic upside, as stores have cut back on offerings.

We strongly urge you to include in the next coronavirus stimulus package at least \$2 billion for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to purchase domestically harvested and processed seafood products and distribute them to local, state, and national non-profits providing food to hungry Americans. Given that few seafood producers have historically participated in USDA commodity purchasing programs, we request that \$1 billion be set aside to finance the purchase by USDA of seafood products that have not typically been purchased and that have experienced economic impacts as a result of coronavirus.

We also ask that you include an additional \$1.5 billion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the terms of section 12005 of the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) in order to provide direct relief to Tribal, subsistence, commercial, and charter fishery participants impacted by coronavirus. We request that Congress appropriate and permit the Secretary to make funding available as soon as practicable to all fishery participants, including commercial and recreational fishing and seafood businesses that have been impacted by declines in tourism and the closure of restaurants and other food services industries.

The seafood industry is currently facing an unprecedented collapse in demand because of the novel coronavirus. We urge you to facilitate the government purchase of seafood products that would both ensure stability in this key sector and provide healthy, domestically produced food for Americans.

Thank you for your attention to this critical request, and for your continued support of America's seafood industry.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Garret Graves
Member of Congress

Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress

Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

/s/ David Rouzer
Member of Congress

/s/ Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

/s/ Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

/s/ Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

/s/ Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress

/s/ William R. Keating
Member of Congress

/s/ Don Young
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/s/ Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/ Ed Case
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress

/s/ Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

/s/ W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress

/s/ Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/ Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/ Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress

/s/ Jared Golden
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

/s/ G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

/s/ Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress

/s/ Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

/s/ Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/ Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

/s/ Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

/s/ Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

/s/ Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s/ Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s/ Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress

/s/ Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

/s/ Denny Heck
Member of Congress