

December 2, 2025

Chair Ted Cruz
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
Dirksen Senate Office Building 554
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
Hart Senate Office Building 428
Washington, DC 20510

Chair Bruce Westerman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Jared Huffman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, Chair Westerman, and Ranking Member Huffman:

The undersigned organizations, businesses, and individuals write to express strong support for the Marine Aquaculture Research for America (MARA) Act of 2025 (S.2586/H.R.5746) and to urge Congress to pass this bipartisan legislation without delay. Introduced by Senators Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Representatives Mike Ezell (R-MS-04), Ed Case (D-HI-01), Kat Cammack (R-FL-03), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19), the MARA Act lays the groundwork for a science-based approach to developing sustainable offshore aquaculture in U.S. federal waters.

The MARA Act's emphasis on commercial-scale demonstration projects is essential to ensuring that environmental protection remains at the forefront of any future aquaculture development. These projects will generate the robust, real-world data needed to evaluate performance across a range of ocean conditions and species, helping to identify best practices that minimize risks to marine ecosystems, water quality, and wildlife. By grounding future permitting standards in rigorous, transparent science, the MARA Act will equip federal and state agencies with the evidence needed to establish high environmental standards and ensure that any growth of U.S. aquaculture proceeds responsibly and sustainably.

Globally, open-ocean aquaculture is one of the fastest-growing and most sustainable forms of food production, with enormous potential to strengthen U.S. food security, improve nutrition, and create quality jobs. Yet, the United States imports the majority of our seafood, half of which is farmed overseas. Despite our vast coastline and world-class science, the U.S. ranks only 18th in global seafood production. We must grow more of our own seafood here at home, using modern tools and technologies that protect ocean health and support coastal economies.

Earlier this year, the World Wildlife Fund and the World Bank released a report entitled *Harnessing the Waters: A Trillion-Dollar Investment Opportunity in Sustainable Aquaculture*, identifying aquaculture as one of the most promising opportunities to build a sustainable global

food system over the next 25 years. The report projects that aquaculture could generate 22 million new jobs by 2050 and represents a \$1.5 trillion investment opportunity. The MARA Act builds on years of bipartisan effort to help the U.S. seize this potential by codifying the existing and effective Office of Aquaculture within NOAA, streamlining permitting, supporting working waterfront infrastructure, and investing in workforce training to prepare the next generation of maritime professionals.

Expanding responsible American aquaculture will strengthen both coastal and inland economies. Coastal communities will benefit from new investment in portside infrastructure and seafood processing, while inland states will gain new markets for U.S.-grown crops such as soybeans, corn, peas, and barley used in sustainable aquafeeds. The broader seafood supply chain, from hatcheries and equipment manufacturers to processors, retailers, and exporters, stands to benefit as well.

Today, not a single fish farm operates in U.S. federal waters. The MARA Act provides the clear, science-based path needed to ensure that any future development supports rather than undermines our existing seafood economy. By putting science, transparency, and environmental stewardship first, this bill charts a responsible course for America's ocean future.

The time to act is now. With the right policies in place, the United States can unlock the full potential of aquaculture and reclaim its leadership in sustainable ocean food production.

Sincerely,



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Jeff Hetrick
Alutiiq Pride Marine Institute
Moose Pass, AK

Keo Fish Farms, Inc.
Keo, AR

Jennifer Hill Booker
Bauhaus Biergarten
Springdale, AR

Seafood and Gender Equality (SAGE)
Berkeley, CA

UC Berkeley International Bioeconomy
Macroalgae Center
Berkeley, CA

Mundo Management
Border Grill Restaurants and Truck
Los Angeles and Palm Springs, CA, Las
Vegas, NV

Tony Messina
Los Angeles, CA

AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA / San Pedro, CA

Lusamerica Foods, Inc
Morgan Hill, CA, Vernon, CA, Moss
Landing, CA, and Fife, WA

Food + Planet
Ojai, CA

Iva Gaglione
Star Milling Co
Perris, CA

Tumie Coco LLC
Redondo Beach, CA

TransparentSea Inc.
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Don Kent, CEO
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Buena Vista Seafood LLC
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Michelle Minori
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Poppy Brittingham
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Sheila Lucero, Culinary Director
Big Red F Restaurant Group
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Jax Fish House
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Manolin
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Sandra Rietkerk
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Veramaris
Northglenn, CO

Chef Kyle Bailey, Chef/Partner
Long Shot Hospitality
The Salt Line Restaurants / Dauphine's /
Ometeo
Washington, DC

James Collins
Florida

Charter Fisherman's Association
Destin, FL (Gulf-wide)

Beaver Street Fisheries
Jacksonville, FL

Carlos Tudela
University of Miami
Miami, FL

Daniel Bennetti
University of Miami
Miami, FL

Julio Camperio
University of Miami
Miami, FL

Terra Blue Farms
Pine Island, FL

Piemonte Foods
Pompano Beach, FL

Candor Consulting LLC
Pompano Beach, FL

Chef Steve Phelps
Indigenous Restaurant
Sarasota, FL

Mote Marine Laboratory
Sarasota, FL

Olivia Blondheim
CSA Future Leader
Spring Hill, FL

Leonardo Ibarra Castro
St Augustine, FL

Your Resident Gourmet
Atlanta, GA

Tamie Cook Culinary Productions
Atlanta, GA

Matthew Raiford, Chef/Farmer/Author
Gilliard Farms
Brunswick, GA

Blue Ocean Mariculture
Kailua-Kona HI

Ocean Era, Inc.
Kailua-Kona, HI

Tidepoint Group LLC
Kailua-Kona, HI

Soy Aquaculture Alliance
Ankeny, IA

Riverence Holdings LLC
Boise, ID

Rangen, LLC
Buhl, ID

Brian Small
University of Idaho Aquaculture Research
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Pelagic ProVisions California LLC
Sandpoint, ID

Gary Fornshell, Aquaculture Results LLC
Twin Falls, ID

Fortune International
Bensenville, IL

Frontera Grill
Chicago, IL

Wenger Manufacturing
Sabetha, KS

A La Carte Specialty Foods
New Orleans, LA

Ashwin Inc. dba Saffron Nola & The
Kingsway
New Orleans, LA

Kira Smiley
Allston, MA

Jeremy Sewall
Boston, MA

Innovasea
Boston, MA

James Sibley
Carlisle, MA

Slade Gorton & Co., Inc.
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Michael Rubino
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Imani Black
Minorities In Aquaculture
Easton, MD

Sol Mariculture
Brunswick, ME

SalmoGen Company Inc.
Franklin, ME

Browne Trading Company
Portland, ME

Natalie Lord
Portland, ME

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South Freeport, ME

Foodworks & Passport Hospitality
Minneapolis, MN

Cargill, Inc.
Wayzata, MN

Dr. Kelly Lucas
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS

Hunter Evans, Owner / Chef
Elvies & Mayflower Cafe
Jackson, MS

SYL Charters
Ocean Springs, MS

Ganesh Kumar
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Piscine LLC
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AquaRange Research LLC
Bozeman, MT

Elizabeth Kenyon LLC
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Montana Microbial Products LLC
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Nicks on Broadway
Providence, RI

Lowcountry Oyster Company
Charleston, SC

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Good Luck Hospitality LLC
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Valentine Thomas
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Sysco Corporation
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