

This transcript is from a NOAA-led National Stakeholder Call focused on Section 216(c) of the [Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#). The executive order directs NOAA to collect recommendations on how to make fisheries—including aquaculture—and protected resources more resilient to climate change. This includes changes in management and conservation measures and improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research.

March 23, 2021

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you all for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode until the Public Comment Session of today's call. At that time, you may dial star 1 on your phone to make a comment. I would like to inform all parties that today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. I will now turn the call over to Kate Naughten. Thank you. You may begin.

Kate Naughten: Thank you (Amber), and good morning everybody. I'm Kate Naughten. I'm the Communications Director for NOAA Fisheries. I will be working with (Amber), the Operator, today and our speakers to manage the call.

So welcome. Just a few housekeeping issues I'll go over very quickly. So this is the first of three National Stakeholder calls that we are hosting. Two will focus on all stakeholders and one is specifically for state and tribal governments. All the information on the other two calls is available on our web site if you're interested in those as well.

And also I will note that we will continue to gather input through 2021. Again more information on where we are doing that is on our web site.

Today we have many, many dozens of people on the call already. So we're going to limit to three minutes per speaker. And the Operator will assist me with that.

If as you – as she just mentioned, if you would like to make a comment please go ahead and queue up. And she – you will have to record your name. And then the Operator will introduce you using your name. If you would also like to let us know your affiliation when you have an open mic please do.

We are just accepting comments today. So there will not be a dialogue. So if, again if you have questions on this process and what else is in store, I really encourage you to go to our web site. There's a lot. There's background information there.

If folks are shy and we do have time left over, and we don't fill it all, we could possibly go back for a second round of comments but that doesn't look likely based on the amount of people we have on this call.

And also just a reminder, we have an option to submit longer comments through an email box. And that address is as well on our web site. And I'll just read it to you here. It's Oceanresources, all one word, oceanresources.climate@noaa.gov.

Right now, I'd like to introduce our speakers. Today Paul Doremus will be giving some introductory remarks. And also with us is Sam Rauch. Paul is our Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. He's in the acting role right now. In that role he oversees the management and conservation of recreational and commercial fisheries including aspects of marine aquaculture, the preservation and maintenance of safe sources of seafood and the protection of marine

mammals, marine protected species, and coastal fisheries habitat within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

Sam Rauch is our Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs. In that role he oversees NOAA Fisheries regulatory actions and programs including those to support the conservation and recovery of marine mammals and endangered species, ensure economically and biologically sustainable fisheries, and promote habitat stewardship through restoration and conservation.

I'm going to now turn the call over to Paul for some opening remarks. And then we will – and he will set the context for the call and then we will open it up to comments, Paul over to you.

Paul Doremus: Okay, thank you very much. Thanks for the introduction and for orchestrating the call today and thanks to all those who have taken the time to dial in, join us, and share your thoughts.

We're here to hear from you about Section 216(c) of President Biden's recent Executive Order 14008. This is Executive Order titled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.

And this has some specific requirements in it under Section 216(c) for NOAA to, and I'll quote from the EO, to initiate efforts in the first 60 days from the date of this order to collect input from fishermen, Regional Ocean Councils, Fishery Management Council, scientists and other stakeholders on how to make fisheries and protected resources more resilient to climate change including changes in management and conservation measures, improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research.

President Biden has shown clear support for addressing the effects of climate change across all sectors in the United States. And this particular provision points to fisheries, protected resources, areas where we all have common interests and where certainly NOAA has very fundamental statutory responsibilities.

And research has shown and we know that fisheries, protected resources, and their associate habitats and ecosystems are being affected by climate change. Climate related changes in ocean ecosystems include warming oceans, increasing acidification, rising sea levels. All those can affect the distribution and abundance of marine species and in so doing affect the people and communities that depend on them. This is present today.

And we at NOAA work with our scientists, with our partners, to understand and respond to changing climate and ocean conditions and seek to minimize impacts, adapt to the changes that are coming and to ensure that future generations can enjoy the benefits of healthy marine ecosystems. That is fundamental to what we do.

And we want to hear from everyone on the call and many others through the different avenues that we've been engaging under the direction of this Executive Order to ensure that federal regulations are appropriate for managed species, industry and the public. We want to ensure that we're doing all that we can to sustain resilient fisheries and protected resources.

And today is our chance to hear from you and we invite you to provide your thoughts on how to make fisheries and protected resources more resilient to climate change.

The Executive Order as I noted before directs us to collect recommendations on how to make fisheries including aquaculture and protected resources resilient to climate change. And this could include changes in management and conservation measures. It could include improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research. We have a number of NOAA authorities that relate to this EO including the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, National Marine Sanctuaries Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, there's others. Those are some of the primaries.

And all of this puts us in a position where we would benefit greatly from your input, which we will use gathered from this forum and others to inform next steps that we take under the terms of this Executive Order and with future actions of the Administration.

And we'll also internally include input from this series of engagements into the Regional Action Plans under NOAA's Fisheries Climate Science Strategy, which we've had underway for some time.

So we're, as Kate mentioned earlier, accepting public comments at Oceanresources.climate@noaa.gov over a 30 day period. The deadline for comments is the 2nd of April. And you can get all of that information, the request for information and other information about this engagement on the web site as Kate mentioned.

And we really do appreciate everybody's time and attention. Unfortunately, as Kate mentioned, we don't have the opportunity to interact today. We're in listen only mode. And we'll devote our entire time and Sam and I will be, among others from our staff, paying close attention and recording your input.

And we really look forward to hearing what you have to say on this very large and very urgent topic.

So Kate I will turn it back to you to manage the process of taking people's remarks. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Thank you very much Paul. (Amber), will you remind our callers how to queue up for a comment?

Coordinator: Great. Thank you, Kate. Yes. So if you would like to make a comment you may dial star 1, unmute your line and record your name clearly. It will be required to introduce you. If you would like to withdraw your question you can dial star 2 or excuse me, your comment. If – again, if you have a comment, you can dial star 1.

And our first comment here will come from Eric Brazer. Eric, your line is now open.

Eric Brazer: Great. Thank you very much. Can you hear me?

Kate Naughten: Yes. Hi Eric, go ahead.

Eric Brazer: Hi. Great, thank you, thank you Paul, Sam, and Kate for the opportunity to speak. My name's Eric Brazer. I'm the Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance. We're the largest organization of commercial grouper and snapper fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico with members in all five Gulf States from Brownsville, Texas to the Florida Keys. I appreciate the chance to speak. We will also be submitting written comments by the deadline.

Three points I'd like to make today, number one, seafood is the solution to many of our climate related problems. You know we have a heart healthy protein that's readily accessible with a very low carbon footprint and in many cases much lower than land-based protein industries.

We need the chance to support the nation's food security. We need better promotion of U.S. wild caught species. U.S. seafood is sustainable. It's some of the best in the world. We need to look to ways to increase seafood demand.

We need more opportunities to support the nation's workforce. We need more prospects for business adaptation and evolution especially because the environment in which these fishing businesses need to operate are changing at a rapid pace. We're looking for more opportunities for young fishermen development programs, vocational training, and other programs to support the next generation of businessmen and women that want to feed this country and to carry on the legacy of the current generation.

Number two, I mentioned ecosystems and I think it's critical that we start to think of marine ecosystems and land ecosystems as one. We need to gain a better understanding of the watershed impacts on coastal and offshore marine fisheries and to start to grasp the interface between the land and the sea. And we can look to examples like Pebble Mine in Alaska, red tide issues in the Eastern Gulf and the Mississippi River Dead Zone as prime examples of this larger ecosystem question.

We need a better understanding and knocking out of the seafood supply chain. You know the fisheries ecosystem includes fish houses, transport companies, seafood markets and restaurants, bait and tackle shops, engine manufacturers, tourism, hotels, you know, basically all aspects of coastal communities and even inland communities as well for the seafood consuming public.

We need to get a better handle on imports and getting a better understanding of the environmental conservation and the human rights impacts of importing most of our seafood. We need to put America first for seafood.

And I'm afraid I'm running out of time. So I will leave the remainder of my comments about accountability, sustainability, science, and a strong Magnuson-Stevens Act for our written comments to be submitted soon.

And my final thoughts, please consider commercial fishermen as partners. And we want to provide opportunities for meaningful input throughout this process. So thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

Kate Naughten: Eric thank you for your comment. You were right on at three minutes, really appreciate it. For folks who are just joining us, we're limiting comments to three minutes so we can get as many people speaking as possible. Back to you (Amber), thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. And as a reminder, for those comments it's star 1 if you would like to make a comment.

Next up we have Meredith Moore. Meredith, your line is now open.

Meredith Moore: Hi. It's Meredith. You can hear me okay.

Kate Naughten: Yes, Meredith, great. Go ahead.

Meredith Moore: Hi. I'm Meredith Moore. I'm the Director of the Fish Conservation Program at Ocean Conservancy. Thanks for the opportunity to comment today.

We are at a critical moment for fisheries. Climate change is already affecting our oceans and fish and it's also challenging nearly every aspect of fishery management. At Ocean Conservancy we believe that climate ready fisheries management means taking action now to understand, predict, plan, and adapt to the impacts of climate change on fisheries and the communities that depend upon them in order to improve the long-term health and resilience of the ecosystem.

We have four recommendations. First, a central part of achieving climate ready fisheries will be ensuring the fundamental sustainability of U.S. fish stocks. While substantial progress has been made, many U.S. stocks are still experiencing overfishing or struggling to rebuild to healthy level despite legal requirements.

Further, we know of many efforts to reduce accountability requirements on recreational fisheries which threatens the sustainability of stocks. The Biden Administration must recommit to sustainable management of stocks, ending overfishing, and rebuilding our fisheries as these requirements are invaluable for ensuring that fish stocks are as resilient as possible in facing climate change.

Second, we must rapidly expand our understanding of the changes occurring in the ocean. There's a need to build up the science to support management under climate change from expanding survey coverage as fish move to new areas to ramping up the production of research that can support climate and indicator informed stock assessments. The production of climate ready science and data will take increased collaboration across NOAA and with its partners.

Third, NOAA Fisheries must develop an expanded toolkit of approaches and more robust implementation guidance to ensure available climate information is integrated into management.

To achieve this, the agency should work to scale up and accelerate the use of existing tools and approaches like management strategy evaluation, scenario planning, and risk assessments. However, existing tools will not be enough. The agency should provide managers and scientists with more specific guidance on when and how to implement climate ready management and create clear mechanisms to use climate information and decisions even in situations where uncertainty exists. Climate information should be more fully integrated into key parts of management from science and statistical committee advice to fishery management plan decisions.

Finally, how the Executive Order and climate ready fisheries management are implemented matters. These processes should prioritize equity, inclusiveness, and transparency. There is no time to waste. This Executive Order is needed to secure our ocean's long-term ability to provide food and support businesses, recreation, and culture in a changing climate.

We ask the Biden Administration to commit to ensuring this important effort has the capacity and resources it needs to be successful. Thanks very much.

Kate Naughten: Thank you Meredith. (Amber), next.

Coordinator: Thank you. And next up will be Jeff Kaelin. Jeff, your line is now open.

Jeff Kaelin: Yes. Thank you, Kate. Good afternoon Paul and Sam. I'm Jeff Kaelin. I work with Lund's Fisheries in Cape May, New Jersey. I'm the Director of Sustainability and Government Relations, and started in the commercial

fishing industry in 1972 after getting out of the Coast Guard a few years before the Magnuson Act. So as a very young man I was involved in that process.

And I think I attended the first New England Fishery Management Council Meeting in Point Judith, Rhode Island back in the day. Since then I've been a Mid-Atlantic Council member. I sit on the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council now.

And I worked on Capitol Hill back in the early 80s for Bill Cullen, U.S. Senator. And I think it's my first recollection of hearing about the climate crisis.

And that was quite a few years ago now. I think that the Executive Order really is no more than, you know kind of the manifestation of an ongoing political campaign. I don't think we're in a climate crisis. We believe that we've been adapting for many years with ocean changes using a mobile fleet and multiple state and federal permits to survive and bring seafood to American consumers.

And as I said, we've been in this since before the Magnuson Act. And I think that we have a terrific record of avoiding and eliminating overfishing on the Atlantic shore. Many sustainable fisheries, three of our fisheries are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

So our approach is more about business as usual than a crisis kind of element that could introduce, you know, even additional uncertainties in fisheries management. And I think there are some people who would like to see that happen frankly.

But we are survivors. We're resilient already. We already have been dealing with these issues for many, many years.

And, you know, you have a couple of climate problems with some recruitment in some of the northern stocks. That's true.

But there's not much we can do about that. Our science investments are very, very important. Much of what Eric had to say earlier we totally agree with. Continuing the use of study fleets, use cooperative research, create better projections for availability of food and bait fish and recreational opportunities. And minimize uncertainties with data. We don't need additional buffers applied to management uncertainty based on, you know, data poor projections of our being involved in some kind of a crisis. I think that's going to minimize the many years potentially of success we've had with managing fisheries sustainably in America.

And I think we ought to try to maximize the opportunities that already exist, that we do not see as being significantly limited or minimized by a climate crisis unless its additional uncertainties applied to the projections that I just spoke about.

I think the government needs to ask itself, how are you going to measure progress and effectiveness around this issue? I think that's a constructive way to think about how to move ahead in response to some of the issues that Meredith raised. I don't agree with all of them.

But I think we do need partnership and I think we need to think about this more as a long-term commitment and building on the almost 50 years that we've been managing the fisheries sustainably rather than creating a crisis that alienates each other about...

Kate Naughten: Hey Jeff.

Jeff Kaelin: ...whether or not will be enough. So I'll stop there. I don't have a clock in front of me, so I'll stop. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Thank you very much. Next (Amber).

Jeff Kaelin: You were right.

Coordinator: You are welcome. Thank you. And so next up here, and just as a reminder by the way, for those that would like to make a comment, please dial star 1.

And the next comment will come from Lisa Suatoni. Lisa, your line is now open.

Lisa Suatoni: Thank you. I would like to – I'm with NRDC. And I'd like to extend our thanks to NOAA and its expert staff for putting climate ready fisheries at the forefront of your work under the Biden Administration.

We're aware that the agency scientists and other staff are committed to this issue and have already put serious effort into laying the groundwork over several years. And we're very appreciative of their efforts. We believe the timing is perfect for this work to become more community facing and for developing concrete guidance for integrating climate information into management.

The U.S. fisheries management system is regarded among the best in the world in part because the science that NOAA supports. Unfortunately, climate change poses a challenge for fishery scientists. Because the scientists

use the past to predict the future it's a growing problem that they're basing their decisions on an ocean that no longer exists. With so much influx there's serious risk of disruption to our stock assessment and with that reduced stakeholder confidence in the management system.

These challenges can be overcome with reasonable investments in fishery science and infrastructure however. And we strongly support two priority actions already identified by NOAA fishery scientists and other people who spoke today.

The first is the climate fisheries initiative; and secondly, enhanced fish observations. In particular, we believe the climate fisheries initiative, which will bridge NOAA's climate enterprise with NOAA Fisheries, will provide a variety of services to coastal communities to enhance the resilience to climate change. These include climate informed stock assessments, early warning services for marine heat waves, harmful algal blooms, episodes of low pH waters, and regional predictions for melting sea ice and sea level rise.

In the policy space, a top priority for NOAA Fisheries must be strong implementation of science-based conservation requirements to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished fisheries. As the agency has recognized, these core tenets of sustainable management are central to managing fisheries for climate change. Any weakening of implementation risks exacerbating the negative effects of climate change on fish stocks.

NOAA Fisheries also has a key role to play now in making climate ready fisheries actionable. NRDC has identified a number of priority policy areas that warrant closer examination in terms of integrating climate change into fisheries management.

And these include establishing guidance on climate informed stock assessments and on setting catch limits for data limited and data poor stocks, enhancing coordination of councils on shifting stocks, and effective management of emerging fisheries. Adding information on climate impacts into the advice of SACs provided to council, and promoting greater use of decision support tools such as management strategy evaluation.

Again I'd just like to reiterate, the NRDC is thankful for your efforts on this critical issue. NOAA has a critical role in preparing and protecting our coastal communities from climate change and climate ready fisheries is central to that larger mission. So we look forward to working with you to accelerate this transition.

Kate Naughten: Thank you Lisa. Next.

Coordinator: Thank you very much. And just as a reminder for those that would like to make a comment, you can dial star 1.

And I'm just going to allow a few moments for comments to come through here. One moment please.

Kate Naughten: While we're waiting for that, I'm just reminding everybody that comments are very welcome today. This is your opportunity to talk directly to us about this. And I am going to limit initial comments to three minutes. And so we can get through as many people as possible. Thank you.

Coordinator: All right, and I am not showing any comments coming through here, any further comment. So I can turn it back over for now if you would like.

Kate Naughten: (Amber), I think we'll just wait and see if we have anybody who's motivated to give their comment.

Coordinator: Yes. And I do see one coming through. One moment please.

Okay next up, we do have a comment from – and just as a reminder by the way, for those that would like to make a comment, its star 1. And Jake your line is now open.

Jake Everich: Yes. Hello. Good afternoon or I should say, well good morning. I'm calling from Kodiak, Alaska. And obviously I know that I'm talking to the East Coast. My name's Jake Everich. I'm a 30 year-old owner/operator from Kodiak, Alaska. And actually originally from Rhode Island so I'm familiar with the New England Fishery Management process as well.

Again, I'm calling you as an owner/operator of a small trawl vessel in Kodiak, Alaska. In fact we're one of the smallest vessels in the fleet. I'm entirely dependent on the federal trawl fisheries for my living.

I have to agree with the first caller regarding the, you know, the state of our fisheries. I would see this as an opportunity to increase domestic marketing. American seafood and Alaskan seafood is some of the most sustainable seafood in the world. I also have to agree with the caller from Cape May, New Jersey. I strongly feel that we are not in a climate crisis. This is a knee jerk reaction and it's going to lead to ineffective policy that will increase the economic damage to our commercial fishing industry.

This is one of the worse years that my business has had and last year was one of the worst years on record. I just am incredibly frustrated that we're going

to just lock up our fishing grounds and we should see this as an opportunity to increase research.

While I understand that climate change is affecting our fisheries, I'm not denying that. In the five years that I've owned my business I've seen change in my fisheries. All stocks are at historic levels and so are Pacific Ocean search stock levels. The fishing this season has been some of the best that I've seen in my time up here.

You know, again I'm trying not to be passionate about this. But, you know, I just feel that we should see this as an opportunity to better understand how our fisheries are going to change. Increased regulation, closing the ground, that's going to turn more consumers to places like China for their seafood where there is no environmental concern or environmental regulation.

Fishermen are some of the best stewards of the resource. And it's frustrating that we're often seen as not caring or that it doesn't matter to us. It couldn't be further from the truth. It's vital to my livelihood to have healthy fisheries and healthy oceans.

So in closing, I'd like to see this as an opportunity to promote research, collaboration, and understanding a path way forward. Simply closing 30% of our grounds is not the solution. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you very much. And I would like to remind those on the phone if you would like to make a comment you can dial star 1. And I'll allow one moment for any comments to come through.

Okay and we do have a comment here from Ben Zeitlin. Ben, your line is now open.

Ben Zeitlin: Hi. Thank you very much. Yes. My name is Ben Zeitlin. I'm calling in from Atlantean Farms and Atlantean Technologies. We're in Long Island, New York.

And we're coming from a different place here on this call. We believe that we've got some new innovations that can really address what's happening here.

And, you know, I don't want to be caught in the semantics of whether we call it a crisis or something else. Obviously climate change is happening. And it is affecting everybody on this call and far beyond.

And so with that, we know that part of this call, this Executive Order, addresses aquaculture. We have a new innovation where we are looking to create grow domes on the ocean floor. So we're going to be growing crops and actually having fisheries as well within those crop pools in domes on about 40, underneath 40 feet of water. And this can be off the U.S. coast or any coast around the world to eventually help, you know, end world hunger.

And so there's a lot to that. But one of the things that we do in order to do that is we have to be able to protect those undersea domes, these undersea farms.

And in doing so we have another thing at Atlantean Technologies that we've created called wave killer. And wave killer is a system that we put on the ocean floor. And we create massively thick walls of air bubbles. We're talking about millions of air bubbles that mingle together and mix together. And it's almost like Moses parting the Red Sea.

So what happens is this thick wall of air bubbles that's 10 feet wide, 20 feet wide, 50 feet wide, and can span for miles on end. Basically changes the medium of the water from liquid to a gas or air. And waves simply can't travel on air. So as you know, they travel on the surface of the water.

Why am I telling you this, because we can stop ocean waves from coming ashore during hurricanes and other large storms, we can also protect coastal infrastructures, coastal ecosystems with this from all sorts of things.

Also we know, we've spoken with the Navy. We know that sonar and seismic activity from offshore construction, oil drilling, windfarm construction, cannot penetrate these walls of air bubbles. So we're saving the lives of marine life everywhere including in commercial fisheries.

And so that's a big deal. One of the other things about this is even though we're creating these air parameter walls to be used with all sorts of different applications, we also realize that taking – instead of taking millions of bubbles and mixing them together, we can enlarge the size of the bubbles and mix thousands of them together. And raise or elevate cool water from the ocean bottom all the way up to the ocean surface and have that cooler water mixed with the warming surface temperatures to cool those warm surface temperatures, which means that we can address climate change on some level, which means that we can take a Cat 5 hurricane. And if it passes through the Caribbean, if you've got an air bubble popping up and changing the – cooling the surface temperature, maybe now it's a Cat 3 and...

Kate Naughten: Yes.

Ben Zeitlin: ...we also think we can do this in the arctic. So anyway, I know I must be up against my three minutes. Just wanted you all to know that this new

technology exists and it's going to help the entire industry with this resiliency.
Thank you.

Kate Naughten: (Amber), do we have anyone else in line?

Coordinator: Thank you. Yes. And next up we'll have Ellen Peel. Ellen, your line is now open.

Ellen Peel: Hello. Thank you for letting me come in the call. I had an emergency at my house just about the time the call started so I'm just returning and all is well.

But my concern is with the Executive Order stating that there will be no fishing in 30% of the U.S. waters that is going to cause huge economic negative impacts on all the fishing industry. I represent the recreational fishing industry. And closing off 30% is going to cause havoc in terms of the economy. I know the EO has some pleasant words about wanting to, you know, support the coastal communities and that's nice.

But how are you going to be able, because I've been told by some that under the sanctuary management that recreational fishing is encouraged and takes place in most. And that's fine. I know that I've worked with sanctuary officers years ago.

But how are you going to allow fishing in any of these areas with the EO saying no fishing or do you see that recreational fishing would be allowed in any of the designated areas?

Kate Naughten: Ellen, thank you for calling in today. This is Kate. I'm managing the call for fisheries. I would encourage you to look at the Executive Order. And that's

all on our web site. And there is an email there for comments on the Section 216(a) which is...

Ellen Peel: We have sent in, you know, comments and read and reread the Executive Order. I just don't see the words in the Executive Order or anything else I've heard from the office that there is any flexibility. I mean who will identify the potential protected areas? Is that NOAA? Is that NMFS or how is all those going to be defined and are they large? I mean the two that we have in the – or maybe more, in the South Pacific are huge.

Currently there's a close zone off the East Coast of the U.S. and off – and two in the Gulf of Mexico that have been closed for over 20 years. There's no doubt that those are already generating some mitigating benefit. And so if those can be deemed as a protected area so long as recreational fishing can continue that would be great. Anglers have a high standard of conservation.

The – you don't have, it sounds like, any specific answers. You're just taking comments and listening. Is that right?

Kate Naughten: That's correct.

Ellen Peel: Okay, all right. Well do you know at what point and what is the process for identifying the areas, potential areas?

Kate Naughten: I can't address that with you today Ellen. We're just taking input on Section 216(c)...

Ellen Peel: Okay well and...

Kate Naughten: ...which is what NOAA Fisheries is managing right now.

Ellen Peel: Please make sure, you know, we sent into I think it was a portal going straight to (Grace) or her email. But we sent in very specific comments. And I think there are quite a few other anglers that echoed our thoughts.

Kate Naughten: Well thank you very much for calling in today. And thank you for your comments.

Ellen Peel: Well thank you. I wish it'd been more productive. But thank you.

Coordinator: Okay. And we do have another comment here. Next up will be from (Jimmy Hall). (Jimmy), your line is now open.

(Jimmy Hall): Yes. Hello. Can you hear me?

Kate Naughten: Yes (Jimmy), go ahead. Thank you.

(Jimmy Hall): Thank you. Yes. My name is (Jimmy Hall). I'm from Orange Beach, Florida. I'm a 65 year-old commercial fisherman.

You know I have watched our fisheries change almost yearly in my entire life. So the ocean is changing all the time. A changing ocean is nothing new. The stocks that we deal with are – they rise and fall in abundance on cycles. You know we've been dealing with this for a long, long time. I understand that there is possibilities that temperature increases in the ocean could affect our fish stocks.

However, we're not seeing those increases yet at least off of the Florida coast. I'm involved with some stock assessments. And, you know, the question has been asked. What is the temperature doing?

And the data shows that it hasn't increased. So I'm not here to say whether we have a climate crisis that we need to deal with like this or not.

But I can tell you that you don't know what you don't know. And unless you start with more research and data collection before you make any of these type of decisions, you're going the wrong way. And you're simply destroying the fishing industry with more regulations and more closures that are needless possibly. Cooperative research with fishermen who are on the water continuously mostly on a year round basis is the way to go. It's affordable. It's something that needs to be done. You're not doing it. Not enough of it. And your own fisheries' independent surveys are lacking and especially with the recent crises. You know many of the surveys and things have been cancelled.

So there's just a real need to collect a lot more information on a continuing basis. And I would recommend that it be done cooperatively with the fishing industry. Thank you for listening.

Kate Naughten: Thank you for your comment. Appreciate you calling in.

Coordinator: All right, and next up here we'll have Bill Gibbons-Fly. Your – Bill, your line is now open.

Bill Gibbons-Fly: Yes. Thank you very much and greetings to my old colleagues Paul and Sam and all of the others on the line. I am the Executive Director of the American Tuna Boat Association. We represent the U.S. Pacific tuna purse seine fleet. Our members are primarily family owned, multigenerational businesses that have been in the fishing industry for decades.

And we will be submitting written comments. And I'll make a very abbreviated version of those comments here. I'd like to come back to the initial comment that someone made about the carbon footprint of fishing being one of the lowest carbon footprints of any food production activity. No land has to be cleared. No feed needs to be produced. No methane gas is produced by a grazing animal.

So, you know, from one perspective one of the responses that we should be looking at in response to climate change is to increase food production from the fishery sector, which has the lower carbon footprint. Any further restrictions to further reduce or restrict production in the U.S. fishery sector will mean that that food has to be replaced by terrestrial sources of food production or as others have suggested, imports of seafood from other countries that operate nothing close to the kinds of strict regulatory environment that under which the U.S. seafood industry operates.

So our main comment is really a request to NOAA that as we go through this we – that NOAA keep first and foremost in their process three fundamental principles and they've pretty much all been spoken to. But I just will come back and reiterate them, first that the process be science-based. NOAA has the best ocean science in the world. And when the science is applied in a rigorous manner the results speak for themselves. We have the best fishery management system in the world.

But having said that, we've all seen decisions that have been driven more by political considerations than by the science or where scientific efforts have been overridden by political concerns. And we heard about the monuments that have been created in the Pacific and in the Atlantic. And even to a certain extent this 30x30 appears to be quite an arbitrary political goal. And we're not aware of whatever the underlying scientific rationale for that might be.

The second fundamental thing is we really do want to see meaningful stakeholder involvement and engagement. I mean these listening sessions are fine. We very appreciate the opportunity to make these comments. But the real test will be when we come down to deciding what the conservation and management measures are going to be that are going to be implemented and really do hope that NOAA will see the industry as a partner in these efforts.

And in my 10 seconds I have left, the third is that any approach be adaptable and flexible. This has to be an iterative process that can continually be revised when new science becomes available with industry involvement.

And I think my time is up so we will submit a full version of our written comments. And I really very much appreciate the opportunity to speak here today. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Bill, thanks for your comment. Just before we go to the next speaker I just want to remind folks, this call is focused on, and I know this sounds like it's inside baseball, but this call is focused on 216(c) and 216(a). That section in the EO, that's the 30x30 section. And the Department of the Interior is in charge of that section.

We added an email address to our web site that gives you direct access to the inbox at DOI for any comments on Section 216(a). We will be sharing comments we hear today with them. We will also be working with DOI.

So I just - in case you want to take that extra step, I just wanted to point that out. Okay, (Amber) back to you.

Coordinator: Great. Thank you very much. Next up here we have Jeff Angers. Jeff, your line is now open.

Jeff Angers: Thank you very much. I'm Jeff Angers. I'm the President of the Center for Sportfishing Policy. Thank you very much for hosting this today.

You know the recreational fishing and boating community is among America's original conservationists. And as a community we really are eager to work with the Administration to achieve the 30x30 goals in a way that recognizes the significant conservation, social and economic benefits that recreational fishing and boating provides to the nation.

We have a long history of championing marine fisheries conservation policies including gear restrictions, habitat restoration, time and area closures, measures to end overfishing and more.

We really are eager to work with the Administration to ensure that any 30x30 policies build upon our country's existing marine fisheries conservation efforts to support long-term sustainability of these resources while always focusing on maintaining access for public use and enjoyment.

Along with dozens of other recreational fishing and hunting organizations and conservation groups, last fall CSP under the leadership of CSF and many other groups released the Hunting and Fishing Community Statement on the 30x30 initiative. And that statement really provides a few key principles that are going to guide our support for 30x30 policies.

And I know some of you have seen it but I just want to highlight a few of the bullets. Number one, recognizing the positive role that recreational fishing plays in conservation; number two, protected area definitions that allow for

well-managed and sustainable activities; number three, consideration of existing protected areas in measuring progress toward stated goals of 30%; number four, targeted science-based conservation measures developed through a stakeholder driven process to address biodiversity threats; and finally, clearly defined roles and authorities for the entities charged with carrying out the 30x30 initiative.

You know as the groups representing saltwater anglers, boaters, boat builders, fishing equipment manufacturers, retailers, and other parts of the saltwater fishing community we believe that we're well suited to provide insights on how the recreational fishing and boating community can help you achieve this shared vision of 30x30.

And we stand ready to engage our network of regional, state and local experts as more site specific proposals may be developed. Thank you for your time this morning.

Kate Naughten: Thank you very much Jeff. Appreciate your comments.

Coordinator: Great. And as a reminder, for those that would like to make a comment, you can dial star 1 on your phone.

And next up here we have a comment from Ellen Peel. Ellen, your line is now open.

Ellen Peel: Hi. I just want to make some of the other folks on the line in case they haven't seen the letter, the eight Fishery Management Councils put together one letter on the 30x30 expressing that their confidence in the system that's already in place and that has been working.

And their recommendation was that the entire EEZ should already qualify for fish conservation and habitat conservation. And they – the council did not see a need for any other closures.

It's a March letter. So if you don't have it you're welcome to reach out to me and I can send you a copy. Thank you very much.

Kate Naughten: (Amber).

Coordinator: Thank you. And I just want to allow another moment for comments to come through here. Again star 1 please if you want to make your comment. And I'll allow a few moments while we wait for those to come through.

Okay and next up here we will have Jim Kendall. Jim, your line is now open.

Jim Kendall: Thank you. My name is Jim Kendall from New Bedford Seafood Consulting. I'm a former council member and former fisherman. And currently work as an advocate for the industry.

So it should come as no surprise that I have several questions regarding this 30x30 option that's currently be considered. One of the questions that I do have has to do with have we done any kind of analyzing or any kind of mission to prove what we have closed areas already?

Up here in New England there are quite a few closed areas. Back some years ago they had already exceeded 30% of our fishable grounds and that has grown over the years. And I'm sure there hasn't been much compilation of the added effects.

With the coming years and the growing push for offshore winds, there are going to be vast amounts of areas that will be unfishable and semi-protected if that's what you want to describe it as with the growing wind towers that are going to be taking place in the ocean. Those areas will be unfishable. They'll have some benefits and I'm sure they're going to have some negative effects on the ocean bottom.

But if you're closing areas and you're not doing any analysis of whether these closures are beneficial or whether they're harmful and what the true amount of closures would represent I'm sure you haven't done your science.

And basically that's what we were trying to accomplish when we designed these closed areas. They weren't supposed to be just something thrown out there to appease various groups that either make money on this or feel good about it. You're taking away the livelihood of many people and being harmful in the process.

So I just want to state that you need to consider what the effects are of what the effects you're trying to accomplish. And I don't believe that's been done to this point.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Kate Naughten: Thank you for your comment.

Coordinator: All right, and next up here we have Paddy O'Donnell. Your line is now open.

Paddy O'Donnell: Yes good morning or afternoon. Paddy O'Donnell, Kodiak Alaska commercial fisherman. And reading through this Executive Order and listening to the testimony I think you've – well, I mean so my first, I guess,

response to this, this is a knee jerk reaction. This is the Biden Administration reacting to four years of the Trump Administration. And it's politically driven and that's all it is. It's a good feel measure. It stands on the side of a lot of people in this country that oh yes, let's protect stuff.

So we have 155,000 square miles of critical habitat in Alaska here. And I know you guys at NOAA know that. Instead of reliance, they're not doing any better because we have 155,000 square miles coastal. They're not improving. We have all these king crab savings areas closed to fisheries around Alaska and particularly Kodiak here. And guess what, the king crab are not thriving.

The grounds that we do have that are thriving are the grounds that are being harvested, that we are falling in. It's like tilling the soil if you're a farmer. If you leave the ground and the ground remains dormant, then the ground will die. If you consistently turn the soil then you will have productive soil. That's what we have in the ocean.

Closing down areas like we have in Alaska and it's been proven in Alaska. The sea lions are still dying off, 155,000 square miles closed off. So to what end, I mean, where are we going with this. We got to stop this madness. I mean this is politically driven. It's just a political agenda. And there is no scientific-based information that has proven that this has been to the positive.

I don't believe in climate change. The earth is shifting on its axis. It's been proven by a British scientist. And we need to get off that bandwagon. The earth has shift, the rotation of the earth on its axis has shifted throughout time and that will continue to be the case.

So anyhow that's all I have to say. We've been taking from the ocean forever. And we will continue to do it forever. And that's what it is. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Thank you for your comment Mr. O'Donnell.

Coordinator: Okay. And next up here we will have a comment from Marty Scanlon. Marty, your line is now open.

Marty Scanlon: Yes. Marty Scanlon, I'm the President of Blue Water Fishermen's Association. I also serve on the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team as well as the HMS Advisory Panel on behalf of the pelagic longline industry in this country.

And if you want to talk about climate change and the research of climate change and how to deal with and how it would apply in helping protected species, one of the big handicaps that we have right now that we're up against there is the U.S. pelagic longline fleet is the research platform for highly migratory species on all levels within the Atlantic Ocean.

And when you put static closures, which we already have plenty of static closures in existence today, it creates black holes in the scientific data especially as it pertains to climate change. And we're working in the HMS to try to alleviate those – that problem with these black holes.

We will have extensive comment written there, Blue Water, and we'll submit it to you before the proper date.

As far as, you know, the 30x30 one of the arguments on the 30x30 is that 90% they claim of the ocean is unregulated. But what we have to remember in this country is within the EEZ 100% of our waters are sustainably managed. And

even when a vessel that is U.S. flagged fishes outside our EEZ we still must fish sustainably.

So realistically like a few of these stakeholders have already claimed, there's quite a bit of stakeholder, you know, closed areas and there's very many levels of regulations that are in place right now. And whether you're recreational or commercial fishing you should have access to these waters, you know.

When you contract, you know, you can't contract the oceans blindly and eliminate the regulatory process that exists today, and take that out of the equation, just blindly close off 30% of our oceans and displace all of that effort into already regulated and accountable areas and expect that to be the answer. You know if there is a problem, all that you're doing is compounding the problem in a smaller area.

So the answers to 30x30 as it applies to this nation, we've already have 100% of our oceans 100% sustainably fished. That's my comment. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Thank you for your comment sir.

Coordinator: Okay and please as a reminder, if you would like to make a comment you can dial star 1 now. And next up we have Dennis Moran. Dennis, your line is now open.

Dennis Moran: Thank you. Yes. My name is Dennis Moran. I'm the President of Fisherman's Finest. We're an M80 company fishing in the Bearing Sea and North Pacific. And a couple of comments.

First of all, the, you know, at least challenging climate change, I think the issue is whether this 30x30 is helpful. And I think it's pretty clear that there's some negative consequences over it. The – a lot of people and I'm one of them says that this 30x30 is a solution to something that's based on pretty dubious if not pseudo-science at least in the stuff we've read thus far.

But the consequences of something like this are pretty significant. Specifically we know from history and our fishing, my fishing, everybody's fishing in the Bearing Sea that when you do broad area closures you actually drive your carbon footprint up because you send boats. Boats have to spend more time looking for fish in a compressed area. And they have to spend more time driving around for bycatch avoidance.

So we know that. So, you know, if we're going to start another closure we need to recognize that that closure is likely going to cause a significant carbon footprint increase because of the compression of the fleet.

Then the last point I want to make is there's nothing in the MSA that relates – involves carbon footprint at all. And so if we're going to start regulating with carbon footprint being some kind of criteria and we expect the councils to even look at it or create, you know, sustainable regulations, I mean legally sustainable, there needs to be some connection in the MSA with carbon as some kind of criteria. Or that we're just not going to even have the discussion there. Thank you.

Kate Naughten: Thank you sir.

Coordinator: Thank you. And next here we will have Jerry Redden. Jerry, your line is now open.

Jerry Redden: Thank you for inviting me. Can you hear me?

Kate Naughten: Yes sir. Go right ahead.

Jerry Redden: Okay. I'll introduce myself. I'm a farmer and retired Economic Development Director. I'm ecstatic about this RFP that you got, this listening session you have going. I was the Director, excuse me, I was on the Board of Directors for the Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center and Executive Committee for many, many years.

And I do believe there's an opportunity here and would like to be involved in it demonstrating in our coastal blaze the improvement of the – of what's happening in terms of function on the bottom and on the water column itself by combining the efforts of both fisheries and the expertise of aquaculture.

I would recommend and would encourage a demonstration project starting this summer, spring if possible in Johnson Bay right here in Maryland. It's ideally suited for doing a demo and getting hard scientific numbers from.

If that were done I think we would have hard numbers by this fall and this following spring showing the value of that in terms of production both in terms of oxygen and the overall water quality and health of the coastal bays. And as you know, we're heavily dependent upon oxygen from our coastal bays.

Toward that end, I would recommend several people joining in this effort, the experts from Auburn as well as some from Cornell. Mike Timmons is down there in Florida now. So I would like to be involved in such an effort. And if I have the opportunity would love to talk more about it later. That's all I have to say.

Kate Naughten: Thank you Jerry for your comment.

Coordinator: All right, and I would like to just give a moment. If you do have a comment please dial star 1. And I'll just wait a few moments while any comments come through here.

All right, I am not showing any comments coming through. If you would like to, I can turn the call back over.

Kate Naughten: (Amber), let's just give it another minute or two. If somebody hasn't spoken up yet and would like to give us a verbal comment that would be welcome. And as (Amber) said, you hit star 1. We'll just give it another minute or two.

Coordinator: Thank you very much Kate. I will give it just a moment here.

Kate Naughten: Any takers (Amber)?

Coordinator: Yes. Just now. We do have Jerry Redden back in queue. Jerry, your line is now open.

Jerry Redden: Thank you very much for hearing me again. I was a little out puff. I just picked up my wife from the hospital so I was running upstairs to get this call in.

The purpose of this Johnson Bay demonstration I talked about is to reduce the anoxic mud from the bottom being created both from erosion and from dying algae that settles down to the bottom.

And I think we can demonstrate that on a very – because water transfer in that particular area is only 256 days that it actually turns over. So it's a great opportunity to demonstrate how we can reduce that by using standard aquaculture practices that are well-defined and using our fishermen who understand how to apply practices to the fishery itself.

So I think combining those two parts of our industry along with science that's been defined will allow us to demonstrate significant improvements in overall water quality health within a matter of months, not years. And then because it's – I'm suggesting, you know, and it's been done. We're not talking about research, basic research. We're talking about applied work.

And if that – once the numbers and the costs come in then that I could be looked on a larger scale and hopefully on a national scale to improve the water quality in all of our coastal bays because they have suffered dramatically over the last 100 years for a lot of reasons. And we all know that. So I'm not going to go into the reasons why.

But now it's time to correct that. Use the opportunity where politicians are listening to us, demonstrate what it takes with known practices, get a budget for it. And then actually accomplish it instead of doing another study and another study and after decades of funding studies and applied work I'd much prefer funding applied work.

So I think that's all I have to say. If anybody has any questions please call me. I'd be glad to talk to them.

Kate Naughten: Thanks for your comment Jerry.

Coordinator: All right, and I will allow a few more moments here. Star 1 if you want to make a comment. And just a moment, thank you.

Kate Naughten: (Amber) if we don't have anybody else I'm...

Coordinator: Okay.

Kate Naughten: I'd like to turn it back over to Paul for some closing thoughts. And we can let folks get on with their day. So nobody else is in the queue.

Coordinator: I'm sorry. We did have one last comment here. It came through. If you would like I can go ahead and get that opened up.

Kate Naughten: Yes. That'd be fine and then we'll switch over to Paul. Go ahead. Thank you.

Coordinator: Great, thank you very much Kate. So next up we'll have (Holly). (Holly), your line is now open.

(Holly): Yes. Thanks very much. Just one comment after listening to all of the other comments that were being given. It seems that it would be helpful to have more information especially some of the issues coming up regarding the 30/30 proposal. What I'm hearing is that there doesn't seem to be a good understanding as to what's trying to be accomplished.

And I just quickly gone through trying to search in various places for information regarding the, kind of the rationale behind what's being recommended.

And I had a really hard time finding it. So this is not a for or against but just a comment to say it seems like better explanatory information needs to be put out especially prior to holding your next information gathering or public feedback gathering session. Because it doesn't seem – it didn't seem to me to be clear to the folks who were trying to respond as to exactly why and what was the science behind and what was the rationale for what's being proposed.

So that's all I had to say. And I did send in some written comments as well. So thank you very much. Bye-bye.

Kate Naughten: (Holly) thank you for your comment. Paul hopefully you're there at this point.

Paul Doremus: Absolutely Kate. Thank you and many thanks again to everybody for getting on the phone today, sharing your views and many of you who are sending in comments as well, much appreciated.

When the official public comment period ends we'll certainly continue to collect and consider feedback throughout 2021. And we'll, as I indicated earlier, share comments that we receive through this notice and related engagement efforts with other federal agencies that have relevant authorities and mandates so a lot of different topics are coming up. And we need to work across the range of federal agencies that have the relevant authorities in managing ocean resources.

So we anticipate overall, as I said earlier, big question. And it's going to be part of a long-term process for responding to the impacts of climate change on marine resources and the communities that depend on those resources.

And we really do appreciate the views that all of you have conveyed today to help us get oriented towards your thinking. And we look forward to further work along these lines.

Thank you again for participating today. Please do stay in touch and check as we indicated a few times particularly at the outset to stay informed. Do keep in touch with our web site at Oceanresources, all one word, .climate@noaa.gov. Thank you again everyone and Kate, we are good to close for today. Thank you very much.

Kate Naughten: Thanks Paul. And thank you (Amber) for your help. And all the participants, really appreciate it, take care everybody.

Coordinator: And that will conclude today's call. Thank you all for participating. You may disconnect at this time. Speakers please allow one moment for the post-conference.

END