



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) appreciates NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) efforts to address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on U.S. fisheries and wishes to stress the importance of helping fishing and aquaculture businesses survive this setback and American's use and enjoyment of marine fishery resources is sustained. In March 2020, members were asked and provided input to NMFS on an individual basis to allow the agency to quickly assess impacted fishing, seafood, and aquaculture industries across the board and across the nation.

At MAFAC's June/July 2020 meeting, the committee discussed with NMFS leadership how these impacts continue to be felt and wishes to identify for NOAA's attention challenges that continue to affect commercial fishing and aquaculture businesses, recreational fisheries, tribal communities, shore side businesses, restaurants and retail outlets. Many issues affecting the related industries are still urgent, and we encourage NOAA and the Department of Commerce to continue their efforts to provide financial and regulatory relief for affected industries.

MAFAC urges your continued attention to these issues and stands ready to provide input to assist the agency's work. These issues include:

- Suspend or reduce observer coverage.
- Reducing or eliminating financial burdens on fishing businesses. This could include cost recovery for Limited Access Privilege Programs and buyback and/or other fishery loan obligations.
- Addressing near-term financial needs, including
 - Expanding CARES Act funding for seafood/fishing businesses (all businesses) and tribes.
 - Expand PPP loan program for accessibility of seafood/fishing businesses.
 - Provide needed for financial support and intellectual capital to support seafood and fishing cooperatives (or similar entities) to develop direct distribution platforms to customers.
 - Provide support for a National Seafood Promotion Council to address the rapidly shifting demand for seafood products.

- Reducing, streamline or temporarily suspending unnecessary regulations (for commercial; recreational businesses; have one agency (USDA) rather than three, manage aquatic animal health).
- Considering maintaining status quo on quota for 2021 due to reduced data collection in 2020.

Thank you again for your leadership and we look forward to working with you to address these urgent issues.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Fuller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Erika Fuller, Chair