June 6, 2018

To: Members of U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources

RE: Opposing development of marine finfish aquaculture in the United States

Dear Senator:

Industrial marine finfish farming poses serious risks to our oceans, coastal communities, and public health. We represent a variety of stakeholders, industries, and organizations who rely significantly on a healthy ocean ecosystem. We write today on behalf of our organizations and our millions of members and activists to urge you to protect our oceans and oppose any legislation to develop marine finfish aquaculture in the United States.

We collectively represent: fishers, chefs, and seafood suppliers who need clean and healthy oceans to provide quality, nutritious seafood for our customers; tribal nations who hold the ocean ecosystem and its inhabitants as sacred; nonprofit organizations who fight to protect our environment; academics and researchers who study ocean health and conservation; and coastal communities and businesses who depend heavily on the ocean for our livelihoods and wellbeing.
Industrial ocean fish farms have no place in our waters. They cram thousands of fish into enormous floating net pens and cages, exposing wild fish stocks to pests and disease and risking massive farmed fish spills that further threaten wild fish. These operations use assorted pharmaceuticals and toxic chemicals to treat disease and control infestations, which end up in our waters and can negatively impact nearby marine life. The chemicals can also contaminate the farmed fish, raising public health concerns for consumers.

The untreated waste from these facilities pollutes our ecosystems, creating chemical disruptions that can contribute to dead zones and algal blooms in our oceans. And every year these operations attract and oftentimes result in the deaths of wild dolphins, seals, birds, schooling fish, and other marine animals. This industry also poses serious occupational hazards for workers, and has been classified as one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

These industrial farms are built on the factory farm model, which aims to produce the largest quantity of food at the lowest possible cost. This forces all seafood prices downward, lowering the amount consumers may be willing to pay for responsibly and sustainably harvested fish. This directly harms our fishing communities. The massive operations also privatize our public waterways, barring access to limited marine space that could otherwise be used for fishing, boating, tourism, and other activities that bring more value to coastal communities than industrial ocean fish farming.

The dangers associated with industrial ocean fish farms have been documented for decades. In spite of this, Congress is again considering rewriting the Magnuson-Stevens Act, a law intended to protect and conserve our oceans and fisheries, in a way that will allow and encourage faster development of industrial ocean fish farms.

We join together to strongly urge you to protect our marine environment, sea life, existing industries, and our health. Please do not allow any changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act that would aid development of marine finfish aquaculture. Such an addition would be irreconcilable with a law that is explicitly meant to protect us and our oceans.

Sincerely,

Hallie Templeton
Senior Oceans Campaigner
Friends of the Earth
Washington, DC

Marianne Cufone
Executive Director
Recirculating Farms Coalition
New Orleans, Louisiana

Miyoko Sakashita
Oceans Director & Senior Counsel
Center for Biological Diversity
Oakland, CA

Wenonah Hauter
Executive Director
Food & Water Watch
Washington, DC

Jaydee Hanson
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Food Safety
Washington, DC

John Hocevar
Oceans Campaign Director
Greenpeace USA
Washington, D.C.

Cyn Sarthou
Executive Director
Gulf Restoration Network
New Orleans, LA

Joseph Bogaard
Executive Director
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition
Seattle, WA

Eliz Barger
Tennessee Outreach Coordinator
PeaceRoots Alliance, Farms Not Arms
Summertown, TN

Rebekah Hinojosa
Leader
Another Gulf is Possible

Steve Hollis,
President Emeritus
American Federation of Government Employees
Local 3354
St. Louis

Lisa Griffith
National Campaign Coordinator
National Family Farm Coalition
Washington, DC

John E. Peck
Executive Director
Family Farm Defenders
Madison, WI

Susan West
Journalist & Fishing Community Advocate
Raising the Story
Buxton, NC

2 of 4
Leesa Cobb
Executive Director
Port Orford Ocean Resource Team
Port Orford, OR

Alicia Harvie
Advocacy & Farmer Services Director
Farm Aid
Cambridge, MA

Vicki Nichols Goldstein
Founder & Executive Director
Inland Ocean Coalition
Boulder, CO

Lorette Picciano, Executive Director
Marge Townsend, Emeritus
Rural Coalition - North American Farm Alliance
Windsor, OH

Michael Stocker
Director
Ocean Conservation Research
Lagunitas, California

Candace Crespi
Campaign Director
Ocean Preservation Society
Nicasio, CA

Candace Crespi
Campaigns Manager
Blue Sphere Foundation
New York, NY

Graham Unangst-Rufenacht
Field Organizer
Rural Vermont
Montpelier, VT

Lynne Foster & Capt. Ernie Foster Owners
The Albatross Fleet
Hatteras, NC

Niaz Dorry
Coordinating Director
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Gloucester, MA

Cooper Freeman
Program Manager/Policy Advocate
Occidental Arts & Ecology Center
Occidental, CA

Steve Gilman
Interstate Policy Coordinator
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Barre, MA

Andrianna Natsoulas
Executive Director
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc.
Farmington, NY

Eugene Pickett
Founder
Black Farmers and Ranchers New Mexico
Jarales, NM

Rudy Arredondo
President/CEO/Founder
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
Washington, DC

BJ McManama
Campaign Organizer
Indigenous Environmental Network
Bemidji, MN

Sarah Laeng-Gilliatt
Board Member
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire
Concord, NH

Todd Leake
Chair
Citizens Sustainability League – ND Emerado, ND

Eric Holt-Gimenez
Executive Director
Food First
Oakland, CA

Heather Day
Executive Director
Community Alliance for Global Justice
Seattle, WA

Noreen Springstead
Executive Director
WhyHunger
New York, NY

National Coordination
U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance

Michelle Horovitz
Executive Director
Appetite For Change
Minneapolis, MN

Leah Penniman
Co-Executive Director
Soul Fire Farm
Petersburg, NY

Viviana Moreno
Community Organizer
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
Chicago, IL

Amanda Grondin & Greg Friedrichs Co-Owners/Fishermen
Duna Fisheries, LLC (F/V Arminta)
Port Townsend, WA

Mariana Mendoza
Faculty, Urban Sustainability M.A.
Antioch University, Los Angeles Culver City, CA

Robert "Doc" Hall
Co-Founder
Compression Institute

Adam Mason
State Policy Organizing Director
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Des Moines, IA

Derek Ronspies
Chef/Owner
Le Petit Cochon
Seattle, WA

Kendall Whitney
Marketing Manager
Seafood Producers Cooperative
Bellingham, WA

Chris Philips
Managing Editor
Fishermen's News
Seattle, WA

Karen Jurgensen
Chef
Quillisascut Farm
Rice, WA

Aaron Longton
CEO/Fisher
Port Orford Sustainable Seafood
Port Orford, Oregon

Alex Corcoran
Editor in Chief
Edible Seattle Magazine
Seattle, WA

Austin Becker
Co-Chair
Slow Food Seattle
Seattle, WA

Greg Mueller
President & Executive Director
Washington Trollers Association
Westport, WA

Paula Barbeito
Campaign Coordinator
Slow Fish International

Angela Adrar
Executive Director
Climate Justice Alliance

Bianca Picillo & Mark Usewica Co-Owners
Mermaid's Garden
Brooklyn, NY