

CAPE COD COMMERCIAL

FISHERMEN'S ALLIANCE

Small Boats. Big Ideas.

September 29, 2025

U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Re: USDA Reorganization and Support for America's Seafood Industry

Dear Secretary Rollins,

On behalf of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance and the small-boat, community-based fishermen we represent, we write regarding the Department of Agriculture's upcoming reorganization. We urge you to recognize seafood as a critical part of America's food system and to ensure that this reorganization creates new opportunities rather than deepens existing gaps.

The Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance is a member-based nonprofit organization that works to build lasting solutions to protect our ecosystem and the future of our fisheries. Fishermen's Alliance represents 150 fishing businesses and more than 300 fishing families, making our organization the leading voice for commercial fishermen of Cape Cod. We represent a diverse group of commercial fishermen, seafood processors, and shoreside support businesses who depend on access to healthy fish stocks and the marine environment.

For decades, USDA programs have provided vital support to farmers and ranchers across the country. Those investments have fueled modernization, market expansion, and steady food supplies. Unfortunately, America's fishermen have been largely left out. This disparity has created significant challenges for fishing businesses, hindering their ability to modernize, innovate, and thrive in an increasingly competitive global market. A recent study by [Joshua Stoll et al. \(2025\)](#), found that of the \$31.2 billion in funding awarded by USDA, only \$261.7 million went to support projects associated with the seafood sector, representing 0.52% of the grants during the 6-year study period (2018-2023). Of that 0.52%, wild-caught seafood received only 3%.

USDA's reorganization is a chance to change that course. With meaningful investment, our nation's seafood industry can modernize its infrastructure, expand value-added processing, and open steady, reliable markets for small-boat fishermen. Prioritizing domestic seafood in federal food purchasing alone would create enormous ripple effects that could help rebuild aging waterfronts, ensure fair prices for fishermen, and deliver healthy, delicious protein to more Americans.

We respectfully request that the Department create an **Office of Seafood** as part of this reorganization. An Office of Seafood would provide a clear home for our industry within USDA, ensuring that fishermen receive the same recognition, investment, and opportunity long afforded to other producers. We also believe it would promote and provide local seafood at regional scale to foodbanks, community food associations and other entities like public schools, hospitals, and prisons. By committing to work with community-based fishermen,

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USDA can strengthen coastal communities while advancing the Department's mission to feed and nourish the nation.

America's seafood is the best in the world. It is time for USDA to bring fishermen to the table alongside farmers and ranchers. This reorganization offers the chance to build a more inclusive, resilient, and nutritious food system. Let's showcase the bounty of our land and waters with this reorganization!

Thank you for your attention and leadership on this important matter. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further our ideas.

Sincerely,

Aubrey Church
Fisheries Policy Director
Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance

