

National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan

Aquaculture

Domestic aquaculture provides important jobs in coastal communities, and a healthy local food for our country. Expanding the domestic shellfish and finfish aquaculture industry can provide more American jobs and help reduce our country's seafood trade deficit, which was \$11.2 billion in 2011. Americans import most of their seafood, with about half coming from aquaculture.

The National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan identifies specific actions Federal agencies will take to spur our ocean economy, strengthen security, and improve ocean health.



Federal agencies have committed to actions in the Implementation Plan that will benefit the domestic aquaculture industry, including:

- Identify opportunities to streamline processes and reduce duplication of effort in aquaculture permitting;
- Establish an interagency aquaculture initiative that supports jobs and innovation through the National Science and Technology Council's Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture and other partnerships;
- Use existing research priorities to provide scientific information on the environmental health effects of finfish aquaculture to streamline permitting and improve water quality monitoring; and
- Develop pilot projects through the National Shellfish Initiative to identify ways to maximize the environmental benefits and commercial value of shellfish aquaculture.

The Implementation Plan also supports voluntary regional marine planning, which brings together ocean users to share information to plan how we use and sustain ocean resources. Neither the National Ocean Policy nor marine planning creates or changes regulations or authorities.

The vision of the National Ocean Policy is an America whose stewardship ensures that the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.

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Excerpts from the Implementation Plan:

“The aquaculture industry will benefit from streamlined Federal permitting and coordinated research efforts to support sustainable aquaculture.”

“Supporting the growth of sustainable marine aquaculture through the National Shellfish Initiative and building on existing efforts such as the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s Aquaculture Plan has the potential to provide additional jobs.”

“A key goal of the Policy is to improve efficiency across Federal agencies, including permitting, planning, and approval processes to save time and money for ocean-based industries and decision makers at all levels of government while protecting health, safety, and the environment. Interagency work already in progress includes more efficient permitting of shellfish aquaculture activities, which will help produce additional domestic seafood and jobs and provide a template for similar action to support other marine commercial sectors. Through pilot projects developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, Federal agencies will identify opportunities to streamline processes and reduce duplicative efforts while ensuring appropriate environmental and other required safeguards.”

The Appendix of the National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan lists the specific actions Federal agencies have committed to take.

The Implementation Plan and Appendix are available online at www.whitehouse.gov/oceans.