



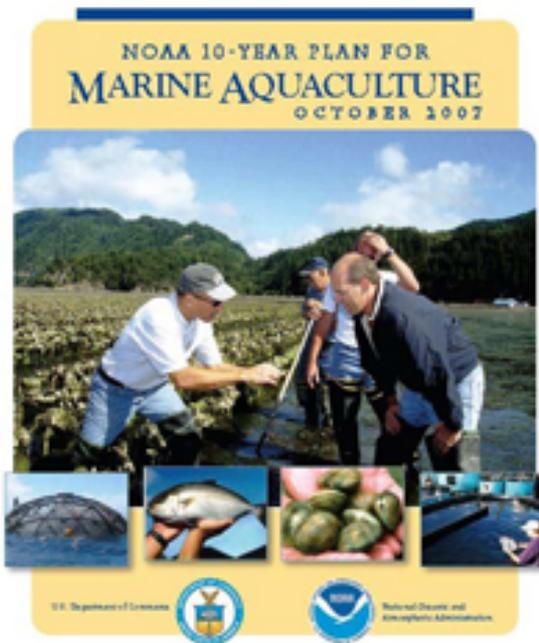
NOAA's and DOC's New Aquaculture Policies



A Report for MAFAC
Key West, Florida
May 24-26, 2011



MAFAC's Past Actions on Aquaculture:



- Recommended drafting a 10-year Aquaculture Plan
- Recommended creation of an office of aquaculture within NMFS and increasing budgetary resources for aquaculture
- Featured aquaculture in MAFAC's 2020 vision report



For about 2 years we have been working on new aquaculture policies. The 60-day public comment period ended April 11

- We received nearly 200 comments to both draft policies
- The comments were generally supportive of the policies
- The comments were aligned with stakeholder interests





Major Themes of Comments Received:

- Increasing U.S. aquaculture is an important goal
- NOAA should lead development of sustainable marine aquaculture
- Regulating marine aquaculture under current law presents challenges
- Links between aquaculture, fishing, seafood supply, working waterfronts, and food security should be acknowledged and strengthened.





Major Themes of Comments Received:

Stakeholders want stronger statements to support their respective interests.

- Industry groups want stronger language in support of development
- Environmental groups want more stringent language on standards
- Fishery Management Councils want more detailed guidance to assist in preparing and implementing aquaculture fishery management plans.
- Researchers, producers, and industry associations want a commitment to a \$30-60 million/year R&D and technology transfer effort.



Major Themes of Comments Received:

Stakeholders have mixed views on several key issues, including:

- Levels of detail
- NOAA's authority to regulate aquaculture under the Magnuson-Stevens Act
- New legislation a prerequisite for aquaculture in federal waters?
- Possible use of non-native or genetically modified species
- Aquaculture's impacts on the environment
- Do we have enough scientific information to move forward?





Key Issues Raised during Public Comment Aquaculture Development

- Seafood and aquaculture industry groups, MAFAC, and research institutions want a stronger sense of urgency and statements of support for aquaculture development
- Some environmental groups do not want NOAA to “facilitate” aquaculture permitting
- Individual companies and industry associations recommend the top priority should be to reduce the costs and time involved in obtaining permits rather than additional government investment.



Key Issues Raised during Public Comment Federal Waters

- Some NGOs questioned NOAA's authority to regulate aquaculture under the Magnuson-Stevens Act
- They advocate Congressional action on new legislation before aquaculture in federal waters can proceed.



Key Issues Raised during Public Comment Calls for Shellfish Initiative

- Regional shellfish associations and individual companies proposed a national shellfish initiative to address commercial production and restoration.
- Shellfish restoration interests including the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and MAFAC support such an initiative.





Key Issues Raised during Public Comment Technology Transfer Projects

- Many stakeholders recommended that NOAA develops tech-transfer projects in collaboration with government and industry. Some NGO's interested in participating
- Innovative, environmentally sustainable marine aquaculture projects to jump-start aquaculture, create jobs in communities, produce healthy, local seafood, maintain and revitalize working waterfronts





Key Issues Raised during Public Comment **State and Regional Council Concerns**

State government comments varied; from Washington State supporting a shellfish initiative to Alaska urging caution on finfish farming in federal waters, to Florida and Hawaii supporting marine aquaculture.

Comments from fishery management councils confirmed earlier actions:

- Gulf of Mexico Council wants to proceed with implementing FMP
- Western Pacific Council awaiting a final NOAA policy before proceeding with developing an aquaculture plan,
- South Atlantic Council noted its aquaculture policy.



MAFAC's Comments

Urged NOAA to “encourage and foster sustainable aquaculture development that provides jobs, products, services...”

Urged NOAA to remove “discouraging” and “heavily qualified” “tone” and to redouble the agency’s efforts to implement the 10-year plan to make up for lost time.

Recommended that the agency updates the 10 year plan with specific implementation actions and projects, in particular:

- Launch a national shellfish initiative
- Enable aquaculture to proceed in federal waters by seeking to introduce legislation and/or urging regional fishery management councils to adopt aquaculture regulations consistent with the NOAA Aquaculture Policy



Next Steps:

- Revision of policies in light of comments received
- Release of final policies (timing TBD)
- Initiatives and institutional actions to be announced in conjunction with the policies; for example:
 1. Shellfish initiative
 2. Tech-transfer/working waterfronts projects
 3. Implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Aquaculture Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
 4. Revision of the 10-year plan for aquaculture
 5. Creation of an Office of Aquaculture within NMFS



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

