



US aquaculture lobbying group urges Biden to prioritize local seafood production

Stronger America Through Seafood (SATS), a trade group has emerged to promote aquaculture in the United States, has sent a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden, asking that his administration prioritize domestic seafood production.

Specifically, the group has asked that aquaculture be included as part Biden's oceans and climate policies "as a means to build back a stronger, more resilient America."

"Aquaculture presents a unique opportunity to build an American seafood future that can bring us through this challenging time and support a diverse workforce, enhance sustainable ecosystems, and guarantee healthful, locally-sourced protein for American consumers," the group wrote. "As America begins to rebuild from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing America's seafood supply through aquaculture will have benevolent rippling effects throughout many areas of the country. Increased aquaculture production will increase demand for American-grown crops, such as soybeans, corn and peas, which can be used in fish feed, and will open up new markets to heartland farmers while lessening dependence on the uncertainty of foreign trade relationships."

SATS is an industry coalition that includes aquaculture firms and companies in related industries, including Cargill, Sysco, Red Lobster, Pacific Seafoods, High Liner Foods, Innovasea, Fortune Fish, Blue Ocean Mariculture, Pacifico Aquaculture, among others.

The group has called for federal support of the aquaculture industry since it was founded in 2018, arguing that such support would make the domestic food supply more resilient to economic and climate changes, and would augment the country's sustainable food strategy.



The letter, sent on 28 January to Biden as well as Gina Raimondo and Tom Vilsack, Biden's nominees to lead the Commerce and Agriculture departments, was signed by corporate leaders of SATS' 23 members.

"The U.S. seafood community has long understood the importance of supplementing wild- capture fisheries with farm-raised seafood – without it, we simply cannot meet the rising global demand for healthful animal protein.

Research shows that food system diversification will be vital to ensure a more stable food supply in the face of the climate crisis.

Aquaculture can produce nutritious food with little reliance on scarce land and freshwater resources and must be a part of this diversification strategy," the letter said.

"For the U.S. to continue to expand the aquaculture industry and tap into the full economic and environmental potential that aquaculture can provide, we ask that you continue the work of numerous previous administrations, both Republican and Democrat, [which] sought to clarify aquaculture regulatory and management activities across federal agencies."

SATS said federal regulatory clarity is necessary for American-based companies to commit to the time and investment required to establish and develop aquaculture operations in the United States. The group requested with Biden, as well as his oceans and climate teams, "to discuss this process in more detail and to determine where we can be of greatest support to your administration on the broader issues of seafood supply."

"Now perhaps more than ever, we need both sustainable, local food, and new job opportunities for all Americans. Aquaculture can fill both those needs while also limiting impacts on our global environment," the group wrote.



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"We look forward to working with you to bring home the benefits that increased production of sustainable seafood will have for all Americans."

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