

April 2, 2025

Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
agsec@usda.gov

**Subject:** Request for Regulatory Reform in U.S. Aquaculture

Dear Secretary Rollins:

The California Aquaculture Association (CAA)<sup>i</sup> urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture to lead efforts in streamlining aquaculture regulations. We request assistance in coordinating agency leaders from relevant federal bodies to implement the National Aquaculture Act of 1980's vision.

**Key Concerns:**

- **Regulatory Burden:** Overlapping, excessive, and costly regulations hinder small, family-run aquaculture farms, making them uncompetitive against imports. A study estimated \$807 million in lost revenue annually due to regulatory restrictions.
- **Economic & Food Security Impact:** The U.S. imports 82% of its seafood, creating a \$24 billion trade deficit and raising food security concerns. Expanding aquaculture could double production and add 50,000 jobs.
- **Permitting Delays:** Lengthy, costly permit processes prevent expansion. A small demonstration farm off Florida has been stuck in permitting for seven years due to opposition and legal challenges.

**Proposed Solutions:**

- **Legislation** to authorize aquaculture leases and create a streamlined permitting process.
- **Executive Order** directing the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to establish general permits for nearshore and offshore farms, reducing delays and costs.

Aquaculture is essential to U.S. food security and economic growth. We urge immediate action to unlock its potential. We welcome further discussions and appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Tony Vaught  
President, California Aquaculture Association

---

<sup>i</sup> The California Aquaculture Association (CAA) is a producer-supported association representing finfish, shellfish, and algae growers and seafood related businesses throughout California since 1983. The CAA promotes commercial production of plants and animals in aquatic systems to satisfy the needs of consumers for wholesome products that are produced by sustainable means conserving California's land and water resources.