

San Diego Fishermen's Working Group, 8021 Lemon Ave., La Mesa, CA 91941



January 7, 2021

Dear President-Elect Biden,

We are writing to you about two matters of great importance to our members, who are the hard-working men and women of the commercial fishing industry of the greater San Diego, California, region. The decisions that you and your administration make for these key issues will decide whether we can continue to feed the nation with healthy and sustainably sourced seafood, or not. We are pleased to hear your promise to rely upon the best available science when considering these matters.

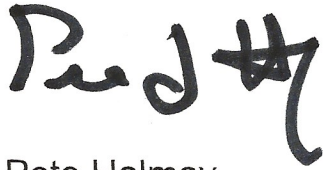
The first issue is the "30x30 initiative" promoted by some which opines that 30% of US land and water must be "protected" to preserve biodiversity. The recently introduced Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act of 2020 proposes to implement this initiative by prohibiting "any commercial extractive or destructive human activity in at least 30 percent of the ocean under United States jurisdiction by 2030." If protection is to be defined in a way that means no extractive activities, then such a mandate will needlessly wipe out our industry at a time when the fragility of U.S. food security is being made clear during this pandemic. It will also be contrary to the successful U.S. fisheries statute, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which already creates a science-based, public process to

address habitat protection, which in turn, enhances marine biodiversity. However, if “protection” is interpreted in a more holistic way, meaning conservation and management towards long-term sustainability, with specific protections when needed, then we believe you will find that the U.S. is largely meeting this goal already. We respectfully draw your attention to the letter (attached) signed by thirty eminent fisheries scientists, which lays out the scientific basis as to why a policy banning ALL extractive activities is unnecessary, destructive to US fisheries, and undermines existing federal laws.

Second, we have concerns about President Trump’s Executive Order 13921, which among other things, prioritizes offshore aquaculture development. Offshore finfish aquaculture can pose a number of environmental and socio-economic risks, including but not limited to: impacts to wild fish stocks; fish escapes; spread of diseases, viruses, and parasites; pharmaceutical use such as antibiotics; untreated discharge of industrial wastewater; interactions with, and impacts on, marine wildlife; and siting issues that can affect vulnerable marine ecosystems and interrupt competing ocean uses such as our priority places to fish. The scientific understanding of large industrial uses of the ocean, like aquaculture, is not yet well developed. Further, since US wild-capture fisheries are, in many instances, under-harvesting in relation to Optimum Yield, the rationale for government support for offshore finfish farming is questionable, at best. We hope that you and your administration will take a critical look at existing US policy towards offshore aquaculture, will take the time to develop needed scientific understanding of its ecosystem effects, and allow directly affected stakeholders, like us, to have a real say in any such development proposals.

Thank you for considering the needs of the commercial fishermen of the San Diego, California, region, and by extension, the needs of our small fishing dependent communities, and the seafood consumers of the U.S. who benefit from our activities. It bears noting, for many underserved U.S. citizens our activities provide the only meaningful opportunity to access the healthy marine resources that exist in our waters. Each of the issues highlighted above, has the potential to reduce access to nature for all

people, with an emphasis on communities of color and low-income communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Halmay". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Pete" written in a larger, more prominent font than the last name "Halmay".

Pete Halmay

President

peterhalmay@gmail.com

attachment