



PRESS RELEASE

January 28, 2021

For more information, contact:

Lori Steele, West Coast Seafood Processors Association: 503-227-5076, lori.wcseafood@gmail.com

Heather Mann, Midwater Trawlers Cooperative: 541-272-4544, heathermunromann@gmail.com

Yelena Nowak, Oregon Trawl Commission: 541-254-3055, yelena@ortrawl.org

West Coast Seafood Industry Eager to Discuss Climate Actions

On the same day the Biden Administration announced the [Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#), the fishing and seafood industry welcomed President Biden's commitment to healthy oceans and inclusion of the industry as a key stakeholder group to discussions about conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

Fishermen and seafood processors are the backbone of many coastal communities, ensuring the stability of thousands of local seafood jobs coastwide. West Coast fisheries, including groundfish, pink shrimp, Dungeness crab, salmon, albacore tuna and Pacific hake, represent some of the best examples of sustainable fisheries management in the world. They emphasize a transparent stakeholder-driven process through both the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) and state fishery management agencies.

"We appreciate that President Biden has committed to a science-based process with meaningful stakeholder engagement," West Coast Seafood Processors Association Executive Director Lori Steele said. "Thankfully, our Council process already provides us this very solid foundation. We are looking forward to continuing to work with our Council partners, and we stand ready to engage with the Biden Administration to ensure the long-term health of our oceans."

"The EO language sets forth a pretty short window in which to engage stakeholders," Midwater Trawlers Cooperative Executive Director Heather Mann said. "My hope is that identifying the commercial fishing

industry in the EO reflects a strong commitment from the administration for meaningful dialog and input, not just a check-the-box exercise.”

“President Biden has made a commitment to set aside partisanship and work on unifying the nation – when it comes to the fishing industry, it is critical that the administration fully understand all the sacrifices we have made and the conservation safeguards we helped put in place to protect our oceans. These safeguards and the resulting protections were accomplished through transparent, stakeholder-driven processes,” Mann continued. “Abandoning the spirit of compromise, which seeks win-win outcomes for conservation and the industry, to focus on broadly sweeping measures that will *not* help the climate and simultaneously hurt the fishing industry, is not unifying nor a success.”

Fishermen and processors can be positive influences for change, given the opportunity.

“When fishery managers seek stakeholder input and, most importantly, apply it to their decisions, it can lead to broad industry buy-in with overwhelmingly effective results,” Oregon Trawl Commission Director Yelena Nowak said. “One great example is the adaptation of the LED lights technology in the Oregon pink shrimp fishery. The entire fleet adapted the technology that helps reduce bycatch of the endangered eulachon long before it became a regulation.

While the Administration is committed to science and stakeholder involvement, the Executive Order includes other provisions that could be detrimental to the seafood industry. Improper planning of offshore wind siting areas, for example, could push fishermen out of prime fishing grounds. “Our ocean environments are extremely complex systems, and implementing the Administration’s objectives will require thoughtful and careful planning,” Lori Steele added. “Unintended social and economic consequences of well-intended conservation objectives could have devastating impacts on fishing communities for generations to come.”

Industry engagement will be crucial, particularly given how vulnerable our fishing communities are right now in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The onset of the pandemic and the sudden loss of restaurant markets created major supply chain problems in 2020, resulting in unemployment and significant business losses.

“The financial contributions of the commercial fishing industry to rural West Coast communities cannot be understated, especially during the pandemic,” Mann said. “In Lincoln County, Oregon, home to Newport and a thriving fishing industry, revenues from fishing activities make up close to 20% of the annual earned revenue in the county.”

“As stewards of the ocean, we are devoted to keeping it healthy and bountiful for this and future generations,” Nowak said. “As producers of one of the healthiest, most sustainable, and one of the lowest carbon footprint proteins on the planet, we are committed to combating the climate crisis and providing healthy nutrition to all Americans.”