

## **To the California Ocean Protection Council:**

I am writing to express support for the Draft Statewide Marine Aquaculture Action Plan. The OPC has produced a serious, science-grounded framework for sustainable marine aquaculture in California, and I applaud that work.

But support for this plan has to be tempered by what it cannot do. The Action Plan identifies the right goals: interagency coordination, enforceable best practices, science-informed siting, and reduced barriers to sustainable production. What it cannot provide is the authority to compel agencies to act, the funding to make coordination real, or the political mandate to resolve the long-standing tension between California's protective coastal instincts and its aspirations for a more sustainable "Blue Food Economy". Only our elected officials can meaningfully move that needle.

California is the largest seafood market in the United States and yet has no coherent sustainable seafood policy. Despite having the building blocks of a robust marine aquaculture and fisheries sector, the vast majority of what Californians consume is imported. This lack of political will results in lost jobs and ultimately exports the environmental and climate impacts of our seafood consumption to regions of lesser regulation.

Marine aquaculture, done well, represents perhaps the most sustainable method of seafood production on the planet - yielding both food system and ecosystem values. And the OPC Action Plan provides a solid framework for moving those paired values forward. But real change and reform in the sector must be part of a larger vision for sustainable seafood in California. A vibrant ocean food system is a public good, and one worthy of the investment, the interagency discipline, and the statutory clarity that would make the Marine Aquaculture Action Plan something more than just a roadmapping exercise.

*The OPC has done its part. It is time for the rest of state government to do theirs.*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.