

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 5, 2024

Bruce Summers, Administrator
United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service
Room 3069 South Agriculture Building
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Administrator Summers:

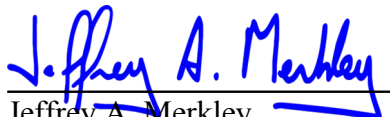
We write to express our support for the West Coast seafood industry – harvesters, processors, and distributors – and write to respectfully request that the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) pursue Section 32 purchases of West Coast Whiting fillets and Rockfish fillets in 2024. Commercial fishing and seafood processing on the West Coast are significant contributors to the nation's seafood production and agricultural economy. The industry serves as the economic backbone for numerous small ports and rural coastal communities in Oregon. Fishing activities are deeply ingrained in the local culture and way of life across the Oregon Coast.

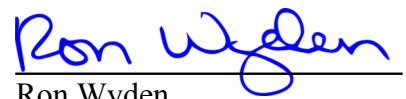
Expanded USDA partnerships with the West Coast seafood industry in 2024 would help to significantly mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the restaurant industry and disruptions in international trade, both of which have exacerbated the strain on domestic demand for the Oregon seafood industry's valuable products. In addition, an influx of imported species and substitutes from other countries has intensified competition in the domestic market, making it difficult for domestic producers to sell their inventory at desired prices. Specifically, Rockfish and Whiting harvesting and production has been subject to changing economic factors such as changes in disposable income, unemployment rates, and consumer confidence that have impacted the demand for seafood products, leading to surplus inventory.

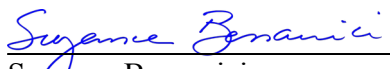
We greatly appreciate the efforts that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made to support our industry in recent years. These continue to be extremely challenging times, and we cannot overstate the significance of the USDA's actions to expand procurement programs to include greater quantities of domestically

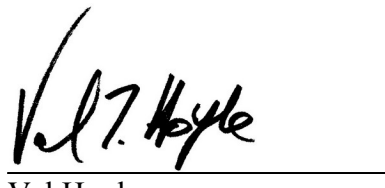
produced seafood. Thank you for your full and fair review of the West Coast seafood industries application. Should you have any further questions, please contact Sophia Francia at Senator Merkley's office at 541-554-5726; Ree Armitage in Senator Wyden's office at 503-477-0306; Espen Swanson in Congresswoman Bonamici's office at 202-941-8585; Cheri Brubaker in Congresswoman Hoyle's office at 202-834-3336; or Alexander O'Keefe in Congresswoman Salinas's office at 503-385-0906

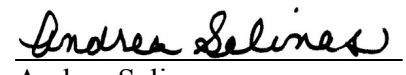
Sincerely,


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Val Hoyle
Member of Congress


Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress