

Sullivan Celebrates New USDA Office of Seafood, Increased Federal Support for Alaska Fishermen



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WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) today joined Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, and Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) to announce the creation of a new USDA Office of Seafood. The office will expand federal support for America's fishermen and seafood harvesters, and ensure fishermen, small businesses, and coastal communities have greater access to USDA programs. Sen. Sullivan has long advocated for greater attention and resources from USDA for America's fishermen, including proposing the establishment of such an office at USDA in his [National Seafood Supply Act](#), introduced in 2023.

"Alaska's fishermen deserve the same federal attention, resources, and risk management tools afforded to America's incredible farmers," **said Sen. Sullivan**. "The new USDA Office of Seafood—an action I've been strongly advocating for over the past decade—opens the door to that opportunity. This office is going to benefit everybody: all of Alaska's fishermen, our small businesses, and our many coastal and Interior communities from across the state. I thank Secretary Rollins and Secretary Lutnick for working closely with me and my team over the past year to fully understand the challenges facing our fishermen and coastal communities and for taking meaningful action on their behalf. With this new office, we're going to build a stronger partnership between USDA, Department of Commerce, the entire Executive Branch, and our fishermen, so they can continue to do what they do best: sustainably harvesting the freshest and healthiest wild seafood in the world."

"Creating an office of seafood at USDA will provide small boat coastal fishermen like me with the resources we need to build successful businesses resilient to market and resource challenges," **said Linda Behnken, executive director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA)**. "This is a game changer for our fleet."

"AMCC welcomes the creation of an Office of Seafood at USDA," **said Michelle Stratton, executive director of the Alaska Marine Community Coalition**. "Expanding USDA's support for the seafood sector is an important step toward providing small-boat fishermen, seafood producers, and coastal communities with the tools and resources that have long helped strengthen America's other food producers. That added support will help stabilize markets, strengthen local economies, and build resilience for the communities that depend on seafood. All of this provides critical value to the nation – through food security, nutrition, and strong coastal economies."

"On behalf of the Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, we strongly support the establishment of a dedicated Office of Seafood at USDA," **said Ray Melovidov, president of the Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association**. "We also wanted to express our gratitude to Senator Sullivan and other members of Congress for this initiative which represents an important step toward ensuring that America's seafood sector—particularly remote and highly dependent fishing communities like Saint Paul Island—has a stronger voice in federal policymaking. A coordinated federal approach to seafood will help improve market access for our products abroad, increase domestic consumption, strengthen supply chains, and better support fishermen, processors, and coastal communities across Alaska and the nation."

"Establishing an office of seafood within the USDA has been a collective vision of the U.S. seafood industry for many years," **said Jeremy Woodrow, executive director of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.** "Just like our country's farmers, America's fishermen feed the world. Establishing this office will provide greater access to USDA programs and alignment with NOAA to ensure that our fishermen and seafood industry continues to thrive well into the future."

"Thank you to USDA for advancing the creation of the Office of Seafood, with strong support and leadership from Senator Sullivan," **said Sterling Prout, F/V Silver Spray, a 3rd generation Alaska crab fisherman from Kodiak, Alaska.** "As a Bering Sea crab fisherman, I see how this will open the door for my family and other hard working American fishing families. This will lead to new opportunities for capital and resources for fishermen and help us enter and expand our markets to bring good American seafood to the tables across the world."

"I commend Senator Sullivan for his advocacy of the commercial fishing industry and his work on helping to create an Office of Seafood within USDA," **said Erik Velsko, founder of Kaia Seafoods.** "As a recent recipient of USDA grant funding for quality enhancing equipment for our Alaskan-based fishing company, I believe having an Office of Seafood within USDA will ensure that US seafood has a seat at that table."

Sen. Sullivan has been a leading advocate for elevating the role of fishermen and seafood harvesters within USDA.

- In November 2025, following Sen. Sullivan's strong advocacy with congressional appropriators, the FY 2026 USDA appropriations bill included \$500,000 to establish a seafood industry liaison at USDA (H.R. 5371). This position is a step toward the creation of an Office of Seafood. The legislation also continued prohibiting funds from being used to procure raw or processed seafood from China for USDA nutrition programs, first secured in the FY 2024 appropriations bill.
- On September 9, 2025 Senator Sullivan [convened a roundtable meeting](#) with Alaska community and fisheries leaders, Secretary Rollins, Secretary Lutnick, Senator Murkowski, Congressman Begich, and other senior federal officials to discuss policy priorities for the Alaska seafood sector and ways the Trump administration can address threats to wild Alaska seafood production and marketing, and the U.S. seafood supply chain as a whole. In her remarks at the meeting, Secretary Rollins mentioned the possibility of establishing an Office of Seafood at the USDA with "more to follow."
- On April 17, 2025, Sen. Sullivan welcomed an [executive order](#) issued by President Donald Trump aimed at "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness."
- In June of 2023, Sen. Sullivan [introduced](#) the *National Seafood Supply Act*, to bolster USDA support for domestic fishermen and seafood producers.
- On September 9, 2020, USDA announced the President's Seafood Trade Relief Program, which provided up to \$530 million for fishermen and the U.S. seafood sector impacted by retaliatory tariffs from foreign governments. Without direct intervention by Sen. Sullivan, the relief program would have been limited solely to lobster harvesters.

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