

America's Fishing Industry Unites to Support Chris Oliver for NOAA Fisheries

Washington, D.C. – January 26, 2017 – In a [nearly unprecedented](#) display of [unanimity](#), members of [the fishing industry](#) representing New England, Pacific, North Pacific, Mid-Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Hawaiian and Southeastern fisheries, as well as the National Fisheries Institute based in Washington, D.C. [have rallied](#) to support the appointment of North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Director Chris Oliver as the next Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

In the past week, [several letters](#) have [been](#) sent [to President](#) Trump's [transition team](#) advocating for the appointment of Mr. Oliver to lead NOAA Fisheries. In total, the letters represented 55 seafood companies, trade associations and conservation groups. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service, is the nation's top regulator of fishing in federal waters.

The push comes at a time when more 90 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported from overseas, resulting in an astonishing \$13 billion seafood trade deficit.

"America's fisheries generate millions of jobs and contribute billions to the economy, but we could do a lot more," said Daniel Occhipinti, General Counsel of Oregon-based Pacific Seafood Group and one of the leaders of the coalition. "We believe Chris Oliver has the experience to increase the economic productivity of our fisheries while also promoting conservation and sustainability, which is critical."

Mr. Oliver has spent his career in fisheries management, serving for the past 16 years as the Executive Director of the NPFMC. Prior to serving as Executive Director, Oliver also worked served as the Deputy Director and Gulf of Alaska Fishery Management Plan Coordinator."

"I've known Chris Oliver for many years, and without a doubt, he has the skills and experience required for this job," said Lori Steele, Executive Director of the West Coast Seafood Processors Association.

"Chris has a keen sense for how to balance competing interests in a way that promotes sustainability, enhances community and, most importantly, optimizes productivity of a fishery."

"I've known Chris for about ten years. What he can bring to NOAA Fisheries is a strong commitment to using the council process for managing fisheries," said Mary Beth Tooley, an at-large member of the New England Fishery Management Council and Maine resident.

“Chris is an ardent believer in the tenets of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. He is committed to achieving optimum yield, while preventing overfishing.”

The diverse coalition supporting Oliver represents a nearly-unprecedented level of cooperation between disparate fishing communities across the nation, including American seafood businesses from more than nine states, dozens of local fishermen’s associations, the leading trade groups from across the country.

“People ask why we have a \$13 billion dollar seafood trade deficit and what we can do to fix it,” said Occhipinti. “The answer isn’t trade barriers, it’s increasing domestic production. We think Chris Oliver is the man for the job.” Signers of the letter include:

FISHING ORGANIZATIONS

- Pacific Seafood Processors Association
Major seafood processing companies with operations in Alaska and Washington
- The Seafood Coalition
Consortium of fishing organizations across the nation
- Freezer Longline Coalition
Longline companies, vessel owners, and related businesses in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA).
- National Fisheries Institute
Non-profit organization dedicated to education about seafood safety, sustainability, and nutrition
- Garden State Seafood Association
New Jersey fishermen and New Jersey’s fisheries dependent businesses
- Organized Fishermen of Florida
Commercial fishermen from Florida.
- Marine Conservation Alliance
“Seafood-interest organization of coastal communities, harvesters, processors, and western Alaska Community Development Quota entities”
- Long Island Commercial Fishing Association
Group dedicated to sustainable fishing out of New York.
- Southeastern Fisheries Association
“Nonprofit fisheries trade association [in the Southeastern United States] founded by a core group of fish dealers in 1952.”
- Golden Gate Fisherman’s Association
“A group of sport fishing professionals and concerned anglers dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the marine fisheries in the San Francisco Golden Gate waters”

- Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers
Alaskans who fish for “King, Snow and Bairdi crab in the Bering Sea.”
- At Sea Processors Association
“Trade association representing six companies that own and operate 16 U.S.-flag catcher/processor vessels.”
- Sportfishing Association of California
Works to promote California sportfishing needs with governing agencies at the state, federal, and international levels.
- Ventura County Commercial Fishermen’s Association
- West Coast Seafood Processors Association
“Serves the needs of the shore-based seafood processors in California, Oregon, and Washington”
- Columbia River Crab Fisherman’s Association
- Coos Bay Trawlers Association
- Western Fishboat Owners Association
“Non-profit representing albacore troll-vessel owners and supporting businesses in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii.”
- American Fishermen’s Research Foundation
“Established in 1971 to aid, encourage, promote, and support science and education in the field of albacore and related fish species.”
- Coalition of Coastal Fisheries
- Directed Sustainable Fisheries
- Southern Offshore Fishing Association

SEAFOOD COMPANIES

- Pacific Seafood
Over 2500 employees at over 35 facilities in seven states
- Dana Wharf Sportfishing
Private sportfishing charter company out of Dana Point, California.
- Coastal Villages
- Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance
A non-profit working to represent commercial fishermen in the Gulf.
- Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen’s Association
Organization for organizing Florida Keys fishermen into “an effective lobby to protect and promote the fishing industry.”

- Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
- Alaskan Leader Seafoods
Longline business that owns four freezer-longliners fishing out of Alaska.
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council
"Community-based, non-profit organization committed to protecting the long-term health of Alaska's marine ecosystems"
- Alaska Whitefish Trawlers
Has represented the Gulf of Alaska shore-based catcher-vessel trawl industry for over four decades.
- Aleutian Spray Fisheries, Inc.
Fishes for Alaska Pollock, Pacific Cod, Opilio Crab, and Alaska King Crab
- Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries
"Formed to allow for an organized community voice for fishing and fisheries in response to current and future state and federal legislation that affects fishing, fisheries, and attendant coastal and marine environments"
- American Albacore Fishing Association
Non-profit representing commercial pole and line vessels.
- American Seafoods Company
Harvests, processes, distributes and markets a diverse array of seafood products from sustainably managed fisheries in U.S. waters off Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.
- Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
"The purpose of the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation to promote economic growth and opportunities for residents of its member communities through sustainable use of the Bering Sea resources."
- Harbor Masters and Port Captains Incorporated
Organization of port leaders throughout California
- California Fisheries & Seafood Institute
"The nation's largest regional organization representing members of the consumer seafood supply industry."
- Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara
"Integrates Regional Efforts Of Fishing Communities With The Aim Of Improving The Economic And Biological Sustainability Of Fisheries"
- California Wetfish Producers Association
Established in 2004 to promote sustainable fisheries and foster cooperative research on sardines, mackerels, anchovy and market squid, as well as coastal tunas
- California Marine Affairs & Navigation Conference
"Consortium of California harbors, ports and marine interest groups."
- Catalina Offshore Products
Seafood company sourced out of Southern California

- California Lobster and Trap Fishermen's Association
- Fishing Vessel Owners Association
Longline vessel operators, based in Seattle.
- Fisheries Survival Fund
Atlantic scallop fishermen from Maine to Virginia.
- Groundfish Forum
Trade association representing 6 trawl companies fishing for flatfish.
- Hawaii Longline Association
"Established in 2000 to advance the interests of the fishermen and related industries involved in the Hawaii longline fisheries."
- Icicle
- Midwest Trawlers Cooperative
- Northwest Food Processors Association
- Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative
"Trade association representing three companies that own and operate 10 U.S.-flag catcher/processor vessels for whiting in the West Coast."
- Southern Offshore Fishing Association
- Tri Marine
- Trident Seafoods
Largest seafood company in the United States
- Washington Trollers Association
"Serving fishermen whose livelihoods depend on the salmon"
- United Catcher Boats
Owners of vessels that trawl for groundfish in the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, and West Coast
- United Fishermen's Marketing Association
- West Coast Fisheries Consultants
Association of consultants working in the West Coast fishing industry

CITY/STATE ENTITIES

- City of Unalaska, Alaska

- Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association
“Non-profit trade association serving the hospitality needs of Oregon.”
- Oregon Trawl Commission
Oregon state government agency.
- California Sea Urchin Commission
Works to “ensure a sustainable sea urchin resource and a reliable supply of quality seafood product”

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