



117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone, and for other purposes.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. RUBIO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

---

**A BILL**

To establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American  
6 Aquaculture Act” or the “AQUAA Act”.

7 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
8 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Purposes.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—NATIONAL STANDARDS

Sec. 101. National standards for sustainable aquaculture.

Sec. 102. National plan to identify and designate aquaculture opportunity areas.

Sec. 103. Aquaculture outside of an aquaculture opportunity area.

TITLE II—CORE ACTIVITIES

Sec. 201. Aquaculture management plans.

Sec. 202. Offshore aquaculture permits.

Sec. 203. Research and development grant program.

Sec. 204. Economic soundness.

TITLE III—REFINEMENTS

Sec. 301. Recordkeeping, inspections, and access to information.

Sec. 302. Marine feed standards.

Sec. 303. Marine use rights.

TITLE IV—ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sec. 401. Office of Aquaculture.

Sec. 402. Support for industry.

Sec. 403. Outreach and education.

Sec. 404. Administration.

Sec. 405. Report and permit terms.

Sec. 406. Federal coordination.

Sec. 407. Prohibited acts.

Sec. 408. Enforcement.

Sec. 409. Authorization of appropriations.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2       The purposes of this Act are—

3               (1) to support the development of a sustainable  
4       marine aquaculture industry in the United States  
5       and enhance access to investment capital;

6               (2) to develop sustainable marine aquaculture  
7       to complement sustainable fisheries and ecosystem-  
8       based management;

9               (3) to clarify the Federal regulatory regime for  
10       sustainable offshore aquaculture and safeguard the

1 marine environment, wild fish stocks, and our coast-  
2 al communities;

3 (4) to support research and technology develop-  
4 ment to further these goals;

5 (5) to create new jobs, and support existing  
6 jobs within the seafood industry of the United  
7 States, including jobs for traditional fishing industry  
8 participants; and

9 (6) to reduce the United States seafood trade  
10 deficit by expanding the domestic supply of seafood  
11 through the production of sustainable offshore aqua-  
12 culture.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) **AQUACULTURE.**—The term “aqua-  
16 culture”—

17 (A) means any activity involved in the  
18 propagation, rearing, or attempted propagation  
19 or rearing, of cultured species, including the  
20 capture and rearing of broodstock;

21 (B) does not include the practice of cap-  
22 turing juvenile finfish to rear to maturity in an  
23 aquaculture facility for subsequent commercial  
24 sale; and

1 (C) does not include the practice of rearing  
2 and releasing cultured species for the purpose  
3 of enhancing wild populations.

4 (2) AQUACULTURE STAKEHOLDER.—The term  
5 “aquaculture stakeholder” means owners and opera-  
6 tors of offshore aquaculture facilities, Regional Fish-  
7 ery Management Councils, interstate fisheries com-  
8 missions, conservation organizations, fisheries asso-  
9 ciations, State, county, and federally recognized In-  
10 dian Tribes, and other interested parties. The term  
11 also includes other Federal agencies that have inter-  
12 ests in aquaculture.

13 (3) COASTAL STATE.—Except as otherwise spe-  
14 cifically provided, the term “coastal State” has the  
15 meaning given the term “coastal state” in section  
16 304(4) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of  
17 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1453(4)).

18 (4) CULTURED SPECIES.—The term “cultured  
19 species” means any species propagated and reared  
20 for marine aquaculture. The term includes larval  
21 marine shellfish species that self-recruit in the off-  
22 shore environment. The term excludes any member  
23 of the class aves, reptilia, or mammalia.

24 (5) EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.—

1           (A) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise speci-  
2           fied by the President in the public interest in  
3           a writing published in the Federal Register, the  
4           term “exclusive economic zone” means a zone,  
5           the outer boundary of which is 200 nautical  
6           miles from the baseline from which the breadth  
7           of the territorial sea is measured (except as es-  
8           tablished by a maritime boundary treaty in  
9           force or being provisionally applied by the  
10          United States or, in the absence of such a trea-  
11          ty, where the distance between the United  
12          States and another country is less than 400  
13          nautical miles, a line equidistant between the  
14          United States and the other country).

15          (B) INNER BOUNDARY.—Without affecting  
16          any Presidential proclamation with regard to  
17          the establishment of the United States terri-  
18          torial sea or exclusive economic zone, the inner  
19          boundary of the exclusive economic zone is—

20                 (i) in the case of the coastal States, a  
21                 line coterminous with the seaward bound-  
22                 ary of each such State, as described in sec-  
23                 tion 4 of the Submerged Lands Act (43  
24                 U.S.C. 1312);

1 (ii) in the case of the Commonwealth  
2 of Puerto Rico, a line 9 nautical miles  
3 from the coastline of the Commonwealth of  
4 Puerto Rico;

5 (iii) in the case of American Samoa,  
6 the United States Virgin Islands, or Guam,  
7 a line 3 geographic miles from the coast-  
8 lines of American Samoa, the United  
9 States Virgin Islands, or Guam, respec-  
10 tively;

11 (iv) in the case of the Commonwealth  
12 of the Northern Mariana Islands—

13 (I) the coastline of the Common-  
14 wealth of the Northern Mariana Is-  
15 lands, until the Commonwealth of the  
16 Northern Mariana Islands is granted  
17 authority by the United States to reg-  
18 ulate all fishing to a line seaward of  
19 its coastline; and

20 (II) upon the United States  
21 grant of such authority, the line es-  
22 tablished by such grant of authority;  
23 or

1 (v) for any possession of the United  
2 States not under clause (ii), (iii), or (iv),  
3 the coastline of such possession.

4 (C) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this defi-  
5 nition may be construed to diminish the author-  
6 ity of the Department of Defense, the Depart-  
7 ment of the Interior, or any other Federal de-  
8 partment or agency.

9 (6) HEALTHY TARGET STOCK.—The term  
10 “healthy target stock” means a component of a fish-  
11 ery managed in a similar or equivalent way to fish-  
12 eries managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery  
13 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801  
14 et seq.) or by a United States interstate marine fish-  
15 eries commission, or a component of a fishery tar-  
16 geted for harvest that is not overfished or experi-  
17 encing overfishing.

18 (7) LESSEE.—The term “lessee” means any  
19 party to a lease, right-of-use and easement, or right-  
20 of-way, or an approved assignment thereof, issued  
21 pursuant to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act  
22 (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

23 (8) MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE.—The term  
24 “multi-trophic aquaculture” means an assemblage of  
25 cultured species grown in close enough proximity to

1       one another so that cultured species provide eco-  
2       system services to one another.

3           (9) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE.—The term “off-  
4       shore aquaculture” means aquaculture conducted in  
5       the exclusive economic zone.

6           (10) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE FACILITY.—The  
7       term “offshore aquaculture facility” means—

8           (A) an installation or structure used, in  
9       whole or in part, for offshore aquaculture; or

10          (B) an area of the seabed, water column,  
11       or the sediment used for offshore aquaculture.

12          (11) SECRETARY.—Except as otherwise specifi-  
13       cally provided, the term “Secretary” means the Sec-  
14       retary of Commerce, acting through the Under Sec-  
15       retary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

16          (12) SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FISHERY FOR  
17       AQUACULTURE FEED.—The term “sustainably man-  
18       aged fishery for aquaculture feed” means a fishery  
19       that is used for feed and that is managed in such  
20       a manner to maintain healthy target stocks, to pro-  
21       tect marine ecosystem structure, productivity, func-  
22       tion, and diversity, and to minimize impacts to non-  
23       target stocks.



# 1 **TITLE I—NATIONAL STANDARDS**

## 2 **SEC. 101. NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUA-** 3 **CULTURE.**

4 (a) **RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.**—Nothing in this  
5 Act shall be construed in derogation of applicable law, and  
6 offshore aquaculture operations shall comply with all ap-  
7 plicable statutes, rules, and regulations. In order to ensure  
8 that implementing regulations for applicable statutes ap-  
9 propriately account for the unique considerations arising  
10 from offshore aquaculture, the Secretary shall comply with  
11 the following:

12 (1) With respect to regulations administered by  
13 the Department of Commerce or National Oceanic  
14 and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary shall  
15 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
16 section and update any regulations as appropriate or  
17 necessary.

18 (2) With respect to Federal regulations not ad-  
19 ministered by the Department of Commerce or Na-  
20 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the  
21 Secretary shall confer with appropriate officials to  
22 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
23 section. After such review, the Agency that admin-  
24 isters the regulations may, as appropriate or nec-  
25 essary, update such regulations.

1 (b) NATIONAL STANDARDS.—Any designation and  
2 establishment of an aquaculture opportunity area, any  
3 aquaculture management plan prepared, any regulation  
4 promulgated, and any permit granted, pursuant to this  
5 Act, shall—

6 (1) encourage development of United States off-  
7 shore aquaculture while remaining consistent with  
8 environmental requirements established by law;

9 (2) be based on the best scientific information  
10 available, taking into account traditional knowledge;

11 (3) be adaptive to offshore aquaculture develop-  
12 ment, accounting for updates in technology and  
13 changes in environmental conditions;

14 (4) prefer species that are native or historically  
15 naturalized to the region; and

16 (5) prioritize the health of cultured species.

17 (c) GUIDELINES.—The Secretary shall establish advi-  
18 sory guidelines (which shall not have the force and effect  
19 of law), based on the national standards, to assist in the  
20 development of aquaculture management plans, and regu-  
21 lations promulgated and permits granted pursuant to this  
22 title.

23 (d) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodi-  
24 cally review the advisory guidelines established under sub-  
25 section (c), as needed, but not less often than once every

1 5 years, to determine whether changed circumstances, ad-  
2 vances in science, or improved management practices war-  
3 rant an amendment or update to the guidelines.

4 **SEC. 102. NATIONAL PLAN TO IDENTIFY AND DESIGNATE**  
5 **AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS.**

6 (a) **RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.**—Nothing in this  
7 section shall be construed in derogation of applicable law  
8 in effect on the date of enactment of this Act regulating  
9 or restricting the use of the exclusive economic zone, and  
10 the Secretary shall comply with all such applicable law  
11 when proposing, designating, and operating an aqua-  
12 culture opportunity area under this section. In order to  
13 ensure that implementing regulations for applicable stat-  
14 utes appropriately account for the unique considerations  
15 arising from offshore aquaculture, the Secretary shall  
16 comply with the following:

17 (1) With respect to regulations administered by  
18 the Department of Commerce or National Oceanic  
19 and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary shall  
20 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
21 section and update any regulations as appropriate or  
22 necessary.

23 (2) With respect to Federal regulations not ad-  
24 ministered by the Department of Commerce or Na-  
25 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the

1 Secretary shall confer with appropriate officials to  
2 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
3 section. After such review, the Agency that admin-  
4 isters the regulations may, as appropriate or nec-  
5 essary, update such regulations.

6 (b) NATIONAL PLAN.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
8 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
9 retary shall, consistent with this section, develop a  
10 plan and timeline to systematically—

11 (A) assess the exclusive economic zone;

12 (B) prepare an inventory of sites suitable  
13 for aquaculture opportunity areas; and

14 (C) designate aquaculture opportunity  
15 areas.

16 (2) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary may des-  
17 ignate an aquaculture opportunity area prior to com-  
18 pletion of the entire inventory under paragraph  
19 (1)(B) for locations where the Secretary has com-  
20 pleted the assessment under paragraph (1)(A) and  
21 developed an aquaculture management plan as re-  
22 quired under subsection (f)(1).

23 (c) ASSESSMENT OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC  
24 ZONE; INVENTORY.—The Secretary shall conduct the as-  
25 sessment and prepare the inventory described in sub-

1 section (b) using relevant scientific, social, and economic  
2 data, and engagement with aquaculture stakeholders and  
3 the public as provided in subsection (e). In conducting the  
4 assessment, the Secretary may consider a cluster of loca-  
5 tions in close proximity with similar conditions as a single  
6 inventory item, provided that each of the locations meets  
7 the criteria established in this section. Based on the fac-  
8 tors listed in subsection (d) and the national standards  
9 in section 101, the Secretary shall make a determination  
10 based on the totality of the circumstances whether a site  
11 under consideration is suitable for sustainable offshore  
12 aquaculture. If the Secretary determines that a site is  
13 suitable, then the site shall be listed in the inventory,  
14 along with—

15 (1) a description of the site, including its co-  
16 ordinates and a map;

17 (2) a thorough evaluation of each factor de-  
18 scribed in subsection (d), and the Secretary's find-  
19 ings regarding each of those factors; and

20 (3) an analysis of how these findings justify the  
21 Secretary's determination that the site is suitable for  
22 sustainable offshore aquaculture.

23 (d) **FACTORS FOR ASSESSMENT.**—In order to con-  
24 duct the assessment in subsection (c), the Secretary shall  
25 consider the following factors:

1           (1) The oceanographic characteristics of the  
2 site.

3           (2) The bathymetry and availability of areas for  
4 anchors, moorings, and other gear.

5           (3) Current and possible future human uses of  
6 the site, and the areas in reasonable proximity to the  
7 site.

8           (4) Current and possible future conservation  
9 uses of the site, and the areas in reasonable prox-  
10 imity to the site.

11           (5) Potential impacts to wild fisheries from the  
12 escape of cultured species, or from cultured species  
13 becoming invasive or hybridizing with wild stocks  
14 within the region.

15           (6) Potential benefits from multi-trophic aqua-  
16 culture, where cultured species provide ecosystem  
17 services to one another.

18           (7) Availability of shore-side fishery infrastruc-  
19 ture and other land-based support facilities to sup-  
20 port offshore aquaculture operations.

21           (8) Expected socioeconomic impacts from oper-  
22 ations on adjacent coastal communities.

23           (9) Other factors that the Secretary determines  
24 are appropriate.

1 (e) ENGAGEMENT.—In conducting the assessment  
2 and inventory under subsection (e), the Secretary shall  
3 conduct engagement with aquaculture stakeholders and  
4 the public as follows:

5 (1) PUBLIC MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS.—The  
6 Secretary shall conduct public meetings to inform in-  
7 terested aquaculture stakeholders about the intent to  
8 include a site in the inventory, share information  
9 about the process, and solicit public feedback, in-  
10 cluding written comments. In addition to public  
11 meetings, the Secretary may, consistent with the  
12 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.),  
13 convene workshops of particular aquaculture stake-  
14 holders or aquaculture stakeholder groups to provide  
15 insight, information, and comments to support the  
16 assessment and inventory process.

17 (2) CONSULTATION WITH STATES, TRIBES, AND  
18 TERRITORIES.—The Secretary shall consult with  
19 States, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and terri-  
20 tories adjacent to or within 100 miles of a site under  
21 consideration for the inventory. Such States, feder-  
22 ally recognized Indian Tribes, and territories may  
23 submit comments to the Secretary, and the Sec-  
24 retary shall consider such comments in the assess-  
25 ment and inventory process.

1 (f) DESIGNATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AQUA-  
2 CULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREA.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—In order to designate and  
4 establish an aquaculture opportunity area, the Sec-  
5 retary shall select a site from the inventory prepared  
6 under subsection (c), and develop an aquaculture  
7 management plan under section 201. In the event  
8 that the Secretary determines the site is not viable  
9 during the development of the aquaculture manage-  
10 ment plan, the Secretary may abandon consideration  
11 of the site, and revise the inventory accordingly.

12 (2) STATE PETITION.—The Governor of any  
13 coastal State or territory, or a Tribal government in  
14 a fisheries management region under the Magnuson-  
15 Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act  
16 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), may submit a request in  
17 writing to the Secretary to petition for locating an  
18 aquaculture opportunity area, or a group of aqua-  
19 culture opportunity areas, in reasonable proximity to  
20 the location of the requesting State, territory, or  
21 Tribal government. The Secretary shall evaluate the  
22 petition and may designate an aquaculture oppor-  
23 tunity area or group of aquaculture opportunity  
24 areas as provided in this section.



1           (3) INITIAL AND SUBSEQUENT ESTABLISHMENT  
2           OF AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS.—The Sec-  
3           retary shall initially establish at least 2 aquaculture  
4           opportunity areas from the inventory developed  
5           under subsection (b) not later than 1 year after the  
6           date of enactment of this Act. Each year thereafter,  
7           the Secretary shall establish not less than 1 addi-  
8           tional aquaculture opportunity area from the inven-  
9           tory until all sites from the inventory have been con-  
10          sidered.

11          (4) ADJUSTMENT OF EXISTING AQUACULTURE  
12          OPPORTUNITY AREAS.—The Secretary may adjust  
13          the dimensions of an established aquaculture oppor-  
14          tunity area as necessary, while accounting for im-  
15          pacts to operating aquaculture facilities, the state of  
16          science, the cost-benefit ratio of the adjustment, and  
17          comments from aquaculture stakeholders and the  
18          general public.

19          (g) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—In order to test  
20          the viability of sustainable offshore aquaculture in a site  
21          listed on the inventory, the Secretary may support dem-  
22          onstration projects in an inventory site to assist in devel-  
23          oping the required contents for an aquaculture manage-  
24          ment plan. Such demonstration projects shall be carried  
25          out in a manner that is consistent with the national stand-

1 ards in section 101. Demonstration projects may include  
2 multidisciplinary research to revive and adapt traditional  
3 aquaculture systems, such as open sea ponds, to support  
4 the needs of modern communities.

5 (h) **STUDY ON AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS**  
6 **IN STATE WATERS.**—Not later than 18 months after the  
7 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct  
8 a study of the feasibility of allowing States to petition for  
9 aquaculture opportunity areas in their waters. The study  
10 shall include information and analysis on the benefits of  
11 aquaculture opportunity areas in State waters and identify  
12 barriers to implementation.

13 (i) **REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary may promulgate  
14 regulations governing the process for implementing this  
15 section.

16 (j) **SPATIAL DATA.**—To support the implementation  
17 of this section, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
18 ministration shall collect and curate spatial data relevant  
19 to aquaculture and make such data publicly available, un-  
20 less otherwise restricted by law.

21 **SEC. 103. AQUACULTURE OUTSIDE OF AN AQUACULTURE**  
22 **OPPORTUNITY AREA.**

23 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section—

24 (1) the term “site proponent” means a non-  
25 governmental entity that assesses a site and develops

1 an aquaculture management plan for that site in ac-  
2 cordance with subsection (c); and

3 (2) the term “notice of intent” means a written  
4 document that communicates the site proponent’s in-  
5 tention to develop an offshore aquaculture site, and  
6 includes the location, type of aquaculture, cultured  
7 species, and other information the Secretary re-  
8 quires.

9 (b) AQUACULTURE OUTSIDE OF AN AQUACULTURE  
10 OPPORTUNITY AREA.—Offshore aquaculture may be con-  
11 ducted outside of an aquaculture opportunity area only as  
12 provided in this section.

13 (c) PROCESS AND REGULATIONS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop  
15 a process and promulgate regulations, consistent  
16 with this section, to allow a site proponent to, at its  
17 own expense—

18 (A) assess sites smaller than an aqua-  
19 culture opportunity area for offshore aqua-  
20 culture in an exclusive economic zone;

21 (B) develop aquaculture management plans  
22 for those sites;

23 (C) submit a notice of intent and applica-  
24 tion to the Secretary requesting approval to  
25 conduct aquaculture at the site; and

1 (D) apply for a permit under section 202.

2 (2) PROCESS.—The process developed by the  
3 Secretary shall include—

4 (A) the process for submitting a notice of  
5 intent, publishing the notice of intent, and solici-  
6 ting comments under subsection (d);

7 (B) the form of application to be used by  
8 the site proponent;

9 (C) the required contents of the applica-  
10 tion, including an analysis of the factors in sec-  
11 tion 102(d) and the items in section 201(e);

12 (D) a process for submitting the comments  
13 received under subsection (d), along with the  
14 disposition of each; and

15 (E) a timeline for the Secretary's consider-  
16 ation and action on the application, which may  
17 be either to approve, deny, or request more in-  
18 formation.

19 (d) NOTICE OF INTENT.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require  
21 each site proponent that is assessing a site under  
22 subsection (c)(1) to submit a notice of intent before  
23 developing an aquaculture management plan or sub-  
24 mitting an application under this section. The Sec-

1       retary, acting through the National Oceanic and At-  
2       mospheric Administration, shall—

3               (A) publish the notice of intent, together  
4       with information on the process under sub-  
5       section (c)(2);

6               (B) deliver the notice of intent, together  
7       with information on the process under sub-  
8       section (c)(2), to—

9                       (i) States and federally recognized In-  
10       dian Tribes within 100 miles of the pro-  
11       posed site; and

12                      (ii) any local governments within 10  
13       miles of the proposed site;

14               (C) convene meetings with aquaculture  
15       stakeholders and the public—

16                      (i) to solicit public comment, including  
17       written comments, to be shared with the  
18       site proponent; and

19                      (ii) including, at a minimum—

20                               (I) at least 1 public meeting for  
21       aquaculture stakeholders; and

22                               (II) meetings with State, local,  
23       and Tribal government representa-  
24       tives; and

1 (D) consult with interested Federal agen-  
2 cies.

3 (2) COMMENTS.—States, federally recognized  
4 Indian Tribes, and local governments described in  
5 paragraph (1)(B) may submit comments on the no-  
6 tice of intent to the Secretary, which shall be shared  
7 with the site proponent.

8 (e) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Each site proponent shall  
9 include all comments received under subsection (d) in the  
10 aquaculture management plan, along with a disposition of  
11 each.

## 12 **TITLE II—CORE ACTIVITIES**

### 13 **SEC. 201. AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT PLANS.**

14 (a) DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION.—In order to im-  
15 plement this Act, the Secretary shall develop and adopt  
16 for aquaculture opportunity areas established under sec-  
17 tion 102, or locations where multiple aquaculture oppor-  
18 tunity areas may be suitable for establishment—

19 (1) an aquaculture management plan; and

20 (2) amendments to each such plan that are nec-  
21 essary from time to time.

22 (b) OVERLAPPING MANAGEMENT AREAS.—The Sec-  
23 retary may use a single aquaculture management plan for  
24 multiple aquaculture opportunity areas where such areas

1 are within reasonable proximity to each other and suffi-  
2 ciently similar.

3 (c) ENGAGEMENT.—Prior to developing, adopting, or  
4 amending an aquaculture management plan under this  
5 section, the Secretary, acting through the National Oce-  
6 anic and Atmospheric Administration, shall meet with  
7 aquaculture stakeholders and the public to solicit their  
8 comments, and consult with interested Federal agencies.  
9 Such comments shall be duly reported in an addendum  
10 to the aquaculture management plan, along with a disposi-  
11 tion of each. At a minimum, meetings under this sub-  
12 section shall include—

13 (1) at least one public meeting for aquaculture  
14 stakeholders; and

15 (2) meetings with State, local, and Tribal gov-  
16 ernment representatives.

17 (d) REQUIRED CONTENTS.—An aquaculture manage-  
18 ment plan that is prepared by the Secretary under this  
19 title shall—

20 (1) include information and analysis that the  
21 Secretary determines is appropriate to establish  
22 common reference points for conducting aquaculture  
23 in the aquaculture opportunity area;

24 (2) specify parameters and guidance for con-  
25 ducting aquaculture in the aquaculture opportunity

1 area, based on the information and analysis under  
2 paragraph (1), including—

3 (A) the geographic boundaries of the aqua-  
4 culture opportunity area;

5 (B) the number of sites that each aqua-  
6 culture opportunity area will support;

7 (C) the species allowed for aquaculture in  
8 the aquaculture opportunity area;

9 (D) standards for the structural integrity  
10 of aquaculture facilities to prevent the escape of  
11 cultured species; and

12 (E) contingency plans that will be re-  
13 quired, along with standards for such plans, for  
14 events including—

15 (i) severe weather;

16 (ii) escape of cultured species;

17 (iii) situations affecting, or compro-  
18 mising, the health of cultured species; and

19 (iv) other contingencies the Secretary  
20 identifies;

21 (3) describe how the Secretary will monitor as-  
22 pects of aquaculture in the aquaculture opportunity  
23 area in order to support compliance with this Act,  
24 including—

25 (A) escape of cultured species;



1 (B) situations affecting, or compromising,  
2 the health of cultured species;

3 (C) the economic and commercial produc-  
4 tivity of the aquaculture opportunity area; and

5 (D) other matters the Secretary identifies;  
6 and

7 (4) prescribe such other measures, require-  
8 ments, or conditions and restrictions as are deter-  
9 mined to be necessary and appropriate for imple-  
10 mentation of this Act.

11 (e) IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.—The Secretary  
12 shall develop and adopt regulations determined to be nec-  
13 essary and appropriate to implement an aquaculture man-  
14 agement plan or plan amendment developed under this  
15 section.

16 (f) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodi-  
17 cally review plans developed under subsection (a) as need-  
18 ed, but not less often than once every 5 years, to deter-  
19 mine whether changed circumstances, advances in science,  
20 or improved management practices warrant an amend-  
21 ment or update to the plan.

22 **SEC. 202. OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PERMITS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—After the Secretary promulgates  
24 final regulations under section 404(a), the Secretary may

1 issue an offshore aquaculture permit if the Secretary de-  
2 termines that—

3 (1) the proposed offshore aquaculture facility,  
4 type of aquaculture operation, and cultured species  
5 are consistent with the purposes in section 2 and the  
6 national standards for sustainable offshore aqua-  
7 culture in section 101;

8 (2) the proposed offshore aquaculture facility,  
9 type of aquaculture operation, and cultured species  
10 are consistent with an established aquaculture man-  
11 agement plan, or the permit applicant has provided  
12 the Secretary with sufficient information and anal-  
13 ysis, such as would be included in an established  
14 aquaculture management plan, to merit issuance, if  
15 the permit is intended to be located outside of an  
16 aquaculture opportunity area;

17 (3) the applicant is able to comply with this Act  
18 and any terms and conditions prescribed under sec-  
19 tion 404(a), is financially responsible, and will oper-  
20 ate the offshore aquaculture facility using the best  
21 practicable technology and maintain it in good work-  
22 ing order; and

23 (4) issuance of the offshore aquaculture permit  
24 is not prohibited under section 407.

1 (b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An offshore aqua-  
2 culture permit holder shall be authorized to conduct off-  
3 shore aquaculture consistent with—

4 (1) this Act, including regulations promulgated  
5 to carry out this Act;

6 (2) other applicable provisions of law, including  
7 regulations; and

8 (3) any terms or conditions imposed by the Na-  
9 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

10 (c) PERMIT PROCEDURE.—

11 (1) APPLICATION.—An applicant for an off-  
12 shore aquaculture permit shall submit an application  
13 to the Secretary. The application shall specify—

14 (A) the proposed location of the offshore  
15 aquaculture facility and the location of on-shore  
16 facilities used for propagation or rearing of cul-  
17 tured species, such as hatcheries or research op-  
18 erations;

19 (B) the type of aquaculture operations that  
20 will be conducted at all facilities described in  
21 subparagraph (A);

22 (C) the cultured species, or a specified  
23 range of species, to be propagated or reared, or  
24 both, at the offshore aquaculture facility;

1 (D) the source of eggs, larvae, or juvenile  
2 cultured species that will be used in aquaculture  
3 operations, an analysis of the likely impacts on  
4 wild populations and habitats, such as preven-  
5 tion of the spread of pathogens, and the infor-  
6 mation upon which the assessment was made;

7 (E) plans to respond to—

8 (i) a natural disaster;

9 (ii) an escapement;

10 (iii) disease; and

11 (iv) other circumstances designate by  
12 the Secretary; and

13 (F) such other design, construction, and  
14 operational information as the Secretary may  
15 require to ensure the integrity of the applicant's  
16 operations and contingency planning.

17 (2) NOTICE.—Whenever the National Oceanic  
18 and Atmospheric Administration receives an offshore  
19 aquaculture permit application, the Secretary shall—

20 (A) provide notice and a copy of the appli-  
21 cation to the Governor of every State or terri-  
22 tory adjacent to or within 100 miles of the pro-  
23 posed site and to the federally recognized In-  
24 dian Tribes within those States; and

1 (B) provide public notice and an oppor-  
2 tunity for public comment for a period of not  
3 less than 60 days for each offshore aquaculture  
4 permit application.

5 (3) COMMENTS AND CONSULTATION.—The Sec-  
6 retary shall take any comments submitted by Gov-  
7 ernors and the public into consideration, and shall  
8 consult with interested aquaculture stakeholders as  
9 warranted before making a final decision on the dis-  
10 position of an offshore aquaculture permit applica-  
11 tion.

12 (4) DEADLINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPLI-  
13 CATIONS FOR PERMITS.—Not later than 30 days  
14 after the date on which the Secretary receives an  
15 offshore aquaculture permit application, the Sec-  
16 retary shall—

17 (A) notify the applicant that the applica-  
18 tion is complete; or

19 (B) notify the applicant that information is  
20 missing and specify any information that is re-  
21 quired to be submitted for the application to be  
22 complete.

23 (5) ISSUANCE OR DEFERRAL.—Not later than  
24 90 days after the period for public comments on a

1 completed application has concluded, the Secretary  
2 shall—

3 (A) issue the permit, if the application  
4 complies with the provisions of this Act, includ-  
5 ing the national standards for sustainable off-  
6 shore aquaculture in section 101, requirements  
7 under the National Environmental Policy Act of  
8 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and other appli-  
9 cable law;

10 (B) defer the decision on the permit, if the  
11 Secretary determines that the application can  
12 be improved to meet the requirements of para-  
13 graph (1), and provide to the applicant a notice  
14 that specifies any steps that the applicant could  
15 take for the permit to be issued; or

16 (C) deny the permit, providing a justifica-  
17 tion for the Secretary's determination that the  
18 application does not meet the requirements of  
19 paragraph (1), or any other applicable law, and  
20 that these issues cannot be remediated.

21 (6) EXTENSION OF REVIEW.—The Secretary  
22 may extend the review period for an additional 90  
23 days if the Secretary determines that further time is  
24 needed to analyze the application. The Secretary  
25 may further extend the review period beyond the ex-

1       tension provided in the preceding sentence if the  
2       Secretary determines that the Department of Com-  
3       merce needs more time to comply with applicable  
4       Federal law, provided that the Secretary's deter-  
5       mination states the specific actions the Department  
6       must undertake, together with deadlines for com-  
7       pleting such actions.

8       (d) PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.—

9             (1) IN GENERAL.—An offshore aquaculture per-  
10       mit holder shall be—

11             (A) a citizen or permanent resident of the  
12       United States; or

13             (B) a corporation, partnership, or other  
14       entity that—

15             (i) is organized and existing under the  
16       laws of the United States or a U.S. State;  
17       and

18             (ii) is not owned by a foreign nation  
19       or majority-controlled by a foreign nation.

20       (2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—Subject to sub-  
21       section (n), the Secretary shall—

22             (A) prescribe the terms and conditions that  
23       apply to each offshore aquaculture permit to  
24       achieve the national standards for sustainable  
25       offshore aquaculture in section 101, and an ap-

1           plicable aquaculture management plan and im-  
2           plementing regulations developed under section  
3           201; and

4           (B) specify in each offshore aquaculture  
5           permit the duration, size, and location of the  
6           offshore aquaculture facility.

7           (3) STATUTES AND REGULATIONS.—Offshore  
8           aquaculture permits are subject to this Act, regula-  
9           tions promulgated pursuant thereto, and other stat-  
10          utes and regulations in existence upon the effective  
11          date of the permit. When promulgating regulations,  
12          the Secretary shall indicate whether and to what ex-  
13          tent the regulations apply to existing offshore aqua-  
14          culture permits.

15          (e) DURATION.—

16           (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
17           graph (2), an offshore aquaculture permit shall have  
18           an initial 15-year duration, and may be renewed  
19           subject to the terms of this Act.

20          (2) EXCEPTIONS.—

21           (A) AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY  
22           AREAS.—A permit issued for offshore aqua-  
23           culture to be conducted in an aquaculture op-  
24           portunity area as provided in section 102 shall  
25           have an initial 25-year duration.



1                   (B) OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF.—The  
2                   Secretary shall develop the duration of an off-  
3                   shore aquaculture permit subject to subsection  
4                   (o)(1), in consultation with the Secretary of the  
5                   Interior, except that the permit shall expire not  
6                   later than the date that the lessee or the les-  
7                   see's operator submits, to the Secretary of the  
8                   Interior, a final application for the decommis-  
9                   sioning and removal of an existing facility upon  
10                  which an offshore aquaculture facility is lo-  
11                  cated.

12               (f) TRANSFER.—A permit may be transferred as pro-  
13               vided under this subsection, provided that the permit is  
14               still valid, and has not been amended due to emergency  
15               circumstances. To propose a transfer, a permittee shall  
16               submit an application to the Secretary, and the Secretary  
17               shall review and make a determination of whether to ap-  
18               prove, deny, or request additional information not later  
19               than 60 days after the date of receipt of the application.  
20               The application shall include—

- 21                   (1) notice to the Secretary of the intention to  
22               transfer;
- 23                   (2) the reason for the transfer;

1           (3) the identity of the transferee, and whether  
2           the transferee holds, has held, or is applying for a  
3           permit under this Act;

4           (4) the transferee's assumption of responsi-  
5           bility, coverage, and liability for activities performed  
6           under the permit, as of the effective date of the  
7           transfer; and

8           (5) any additional information requested by the  
9           Secretary.

10          (g) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew an off-  
11 shore aquaculture permit that has not been revoked for  
12 an additional 15-year period, as provided in subsection (e),  
13 before the end of the original permit's duration, if—

14           (1) the permit or amended permit complies with  
15 existing requirements;

16           (2) the permit holder has not been subject to  
17 sanctions under section 408 or committed a prohib-  
18 ited act under such section;

19           (3) the permit has not been modified because of  
20 emergency considerations; and

21           (4) notice under subsection (c)(2) has been  
22 given.

23          (h) REVOCATION.—The Secretary may, pursuant to  
24 regulations issued under this Act, revoke an offshore  
25 aquaculture permit, if—

1           (1) the permit holder commits a prohibited act  
2           under section 407;

3           (2) the permit holder fails to begin offshore  
4           aquaculture operations within 2 years from the date  
5           the required Federal permits are obtained; or

6           (3) there is an interruption of offshore aqua-  
7           culture operations of at least 2 years in duration  
8           that is unrelated to best management practices.

9           (i) EXPIRATION OR REVOCATION.—Not later than 1  
10          year after the expiration or revocation of an offshore aqua-  
11          culture permit, a permit holder shall—

12           (1) remove all structures, gear, and other prop-  
13           erty from the offshore aquaculture facility site; and

14           (2) take such other measures to restore the site,  
15           as the Secretary considers necessary.

16          (j) EMERGENCY DETERMINATION.—If the Secretary  
17          determines that an emergency exists that poses a signifi-  
18          cant risk to the safety of humans, to the marine environ-  
19          ment, to cultured species, or to the security of the United  
20          States and that requires suspension, modification, or rev-  
21          ocation of an offshore aquaculture permit, the Secretary  
22          may suspend, modify, or revoke the permit for such time  
23          as the Secretary determines is necessary to address the  
24          emergency. The Secretary shall afford the permit holder  
25          a prompt post-suspension, post-modification, or post-rev-

1 ocation opportunity to be heard regarding the suspension,  
2 modification, or revocation.

3 (k) FEES.—

4 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may es-  
6 tablish, by regulation, application fees and an-  
7 nual offshore aquaculture permit fees under  
8 this section.

9 (B) DEPOSIT AND COLLECTION.—The fees  
10 described in subparagraph (A) shall be depos-  
11 ited as offsetting collections in the operations,  
12 research, and facilities account of the National  
13 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Fees  
14 may be collected and made available to the ex-  
15 tent provided in advance in appropriation Acts.

16 (C) SETTING OF FEES.—The fees de-  
17 scribed in subparagraph (A) shall be set as an  
18 amount such that the total revenue from such  
19 fees does not exceed the amount required to  
20 cover the costs of management, data collection,  
21 analysis, annual inspection, and enforcement  
22 activities related to permits under this section.

23 (2) WAIVERS.—The Secretary may waive, in  
24 whole or in part, any fee under this section if an off-

1 shore aquaculture facility is used primarily for re-  
2 search.

3 (3) GUARANTEES.—The Secretary shall require  
4 a permit holder to post a bond or other form of fi-  
5 nancial guarantee in an amount determined by the  
6 Secretary, to be reasonable and commensurate with  
7 the offshore aquaculture operation and as sufficient  
8 to cover, without duplication—

9 (A) any unpaid fees;

10 (B) the cost of removing an offshore aqua-  
11 culture facility at the expiration or revocation of  
12 an offshore aquaculture permit; or

13 (C) the cost of site remediation for impacts  
14 arising from authorized activities.

15 (1) MAGNUSON-STEVEN'S FISHERY CONSERVATION  
16 AND MANAGEMENT ACT.—Beginning on the effective date  
17 of the final regulations promulgated under section 404,  
18 the conduct of offshore aquaculture that is in accordance  
19 with an offshore aquaculture permit issued under this sec-  
20 tion shall not be considered fishing for purposes of the  
21 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Manage-  
22 ment Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), but shall be considered  
23 a fishery under section 3 of the Marine Mammal Protec-  
24 tion Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362).

1       (m) COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER USES.—Each  
2 Federal agency implementing this section, person subject  
3 to this section, and coastal State seeking to review a per-  
4 mit application under this section shall comply with the  
5 applicable provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act  
6 of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.), including regulations  
7 promulgated to carry out such Act.

8       (n) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—An offshore aqua-  
9 culture permit issued under this section shall not super-  
10 sede or substitute for any other authorization required  
11 under Federal or State laws.

12       (o) ACTIONS AFFECTING THE OUTER CONTINENTAL  
13 SHELF.—

14             (1) NOTIFICATION OF SECRETARY OF THE IN-  
15 TERIOR.—The Secretary shall notify the Secretary  
16 of the Interior for each application for an offshore  
17 aquaculture permit that is located on the outer con-  
18 tinental shelf.

19             (2) PRIOR CONSENT REQUIRED.—An offshore  
20 aquaculture facility may not be located on a lease,  
21 right-of-use and easement, or right-of-way author-  
22 ized or permitted under the Outer Continental Shelf  
23 Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.) without the  
24 prior consent of any lessee and other owner of oper-  
25 ating interest.

1           (3) COMPLIANCE REVIEW.—The Secretary of  
2           the Interior shall review each agreement between a  
3           prospective offshore aquaculture operator and a les-  
4           see. The Secretary of the Interior shall approve such  
5           agreement if it is consistent with the Federal lease  
6           terms, the Department of the Interior regulations,  
7           and the Secretary of the Interior's role in the protec-  
8           tion of the marine environment, property, and  
9           human life or health. An agreement under this sub-  
10          section shall—

11                   (A) be part of the information reviewed  
12                   under paragraph (4); and

13                   (B) not be subject to a separate Coastal  
14                   Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C.  
15                   1451 et seq.) review.

16           (4) COORDINATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGE-  
17          MENT ACT REVIEW.—

18                   (A) STATE REVIEW.—

19                           (i) IN GENERAL.—A coastal State's  
20                           review under the Coastal Zone Manage-  
21                           ment Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.)  
22                           shall include any modification or change to  
23                           a lessee's approved plan that results from,  
24                           or is necessary for, the issuance of an off-

1 shore aquaculture permit if the State si-  
2 multaneously receives—

3 (I) the information related to the  
4 modification or change; and

5 (II) the offshore aquaculture per-  
6 mit applicant's consistency certifi-  
7 cation.

8 (ii) SIMULTANEOUS RECEIPT.—If the  
9 coastal State simultaneously receives the  
10 information related to a modification or  
11 change to a lessee's approved plan and the  
12 offshore aquaculture permit applicant's  
13 consistency certification, then—

14 (I) a lessee shall not be required  
15 to submit a separate consistency cer-  
16 tification for the modification or  
17 change under section 307(c)(3)(B) of  
18 the Coastal Zone Management Act of  
19 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1456(c)(3)(B)); and

20 (II) the coastal State's concur-  
21 rence (or presumed concurrence) or  
22 objection to the consistency certifi-  
23 cation for the offshore aquaculture  
24 permit under section 307(c)(3)(A) of  
25 such Act shall apply both—



1 (aa) to the offshore aqua-  
2 culture permit; and

3 (bb) to any related modifica-  
4 tion or change to a lessee's plan  
5 approved under the Outer Conti-  
6 nental Shelf Lands Act (43  
7 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

8 (B) STATE REVIEW UNDER SECTION  
9 307(C)(3)(B) OF THE COASTAL ZONE MANAGE-  
10 MENT ACT OF 1972.—To the extent that a  
11 coastal State is not authorized by section  
12 307(c)(3)(A) of the Coastal Zone Management  
13 Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1456(c)(3)(A)) to re-  
14 view an offshore aquaculture permit application  
15 submitted under this Act, then a modification  
16 or change to a lessee's approved plan shall be  
17 subject to coastal State review under section  
18 307(c)(3)(B) of such Act if a consistency cer-  
19 tification for the modification or change is re-  
20 quired under applicable Federal regulations.

21 (C) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

22 (i) LESSEE'S APPROVED PLAN.—The  
23 term "lessee's approved plan" includes a  
24 document for which a consistency certifi-  
25 cation is required under applicable Federal

1 regulations, such as a change to the ap-  
2 proved plan for decommissioning a facility.

3 (ii) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PERMIT  
4 APPLICANT.—The term “offshore aqua-  
5 culture permit applicant” means an appli-  
6 cant for an offshore aquaculture permit  
7 under this section that—

8 (I) will locate the proposed facil-  
9 ity in an area that would require con-  
10 sent from the lessee as described in  
11 paragraph (2); and

12 (II) is required to submit a con-  
13 sistency certification for its offshore  
14 aquaculture application under section  
15 307(c)(3)(A) of the Coastal Zone  
16 Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C.  
17 1456(c)(3)(A)) to the coastal State.

18 (iii) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PER-  
19 MIT APPLICATION.—The term “offshore  
20 aquaculture permit application” means an  
21 application for an offshore aquaculture  
22 permit under this section that will locate  
23 the proposed facility in an area that would  
24 require consent from the lessee as de-  
25 scribed in paragraph (2).



1 right-of-way, or right-of-use and easement  
2 were issued under the Outer Continental  
3 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.);

4 (iii) issue an order to an offshore  
5 aquaculture permit holder to take any ac-  
6 tion the Secretary of the Interior considers  
7 necessary to ensure safe operations on the  
8 facility, and to protect the marine environ-  
9 ment, property, or human life or health;

10 (iv) require and enforce any additional  
11 terms or conditions that the Secretary of  
12 the Interior considers necessary—

13 (I) to protect the marine environ-  
14 ment, property, or human life or  
15 health; and

16 (II) to ensure the compatibility of  
17 aquaculture operations with activities  
18 for which permits were issued under  
19 the Outer Continental Shelf Lands  
20 Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.); and

21 (v) enforce all requirements contained  
22 in the regulations, lease terms and condi-  
23 tions, and orders under the Outer Conti-  
24 nental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et  
25 seq.).

1 (B) INTERPRETATION.—Failure to comply  
2 with any order issued under subparagraph  
3 (A)(iii) shall constitute a violation of the Outer  
4 Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331  
5 et seq.).

6 (p) ASSURANCE OF ANIMAL HEALTH.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section shall  
8 affect the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture  
9 to—

10 (A) carry out the Animal Health Protec-  
11 tion Act (7 U.S.C. 8301 et seq.) with respect to  
12 cultured species in the exclusive economic zone;  
13 or

14 (B) operate as the lead Federal agency for  
15 providing animal health oversight for cultured  
16 species in the exclusive economic zone, including  
17 animal health and disease risk assessments.

18 (2) CONTINGENCY PLANS.—As part of an appli-  
19 cation for a permit for offshore aquaculture or as  
20 part of an aquaculture management plan established  
21 in section 201, the Secretary of Agriculture may ap-  
22 prove contingency plans, along with standards for  
23 such plans, for events relating to situations affecting  
24 the health of cultured species.

1           (3) CRITERIA FOR PRACTICING VETERINARY  
2           MEDICINE IN WATERS OUTSIDE STATE JURISDIC-  
3           TION.—A veterinarian may practice veterinary medi-  
4           cine in waters outside State jurisdiction if the veteri-  
5           narian—

6                   (A) is licensed and in good standing to  
7                   practice veterinary medicine in any State;

8                   (B) holds a category II veterinary accredi-  
9                   tation from the Animal and Plant Health In-  
10                  spection Service; and

11                  (C) has a valid veterinarian client-patient  
12                  relationship with the facility in which the indi-  
13                  vidual is practicing veterinary medicine.

14           (q) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this Act shall su-  
15           persede permit applications in process on the date of en-  
16           actment of this Act or permits that are in place on the  
17           date of enactment of this Act.

18   **SEC. 203. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PRO-**  
19                   **GRAM.**

20           (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish, in  
21           consultation with applicable Federal agencies, coastal  
22           States, federally recognized Indian Tribes, Regional Fish-  
23           ery Management Councils, academic institutions, and in-  
24           terested aquaculture stakeholders, a research and develop-  
25           ment grant program to further the purposes of this Act.

1 In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall con-  
2 sider using existing programs that leverage State and local  
3 partnerships and take advantage of the extramural re-  
4 search community, including the National Sea Grant Col-  
5 lege Program under the National Sea Grant College Pro-  
6 gram Act (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.).

7 (b) COMPONENTS.—The research and development  
8 grant program described in subsection (a) shall include re-  
9 search conducted internally by the National Oceanic and  
10 Atmospheric Administration, and through the award of  
11 competitive, peer-reviewed grants to fund research and ex-  
12 tension services—

13 (1) to create innovative design and engineering  
14 solutions to common obstacles within the offshore  
15 aquaculture industry;

16 (2) to enable the transition of innovative aqua-  
17 culture technologies, including technologies focused  
18 on the commercialization of high-value marine spe-  
19 cies, from controlled studies to commercial use;

20 (3) to evaluate the role of genetics in relation  
21 to the development of improved lines of brood stock,  
22 disease resistance, and interactions between cultured  
23 species and wild stocks;

1           (4) to advance research into the management,  
2           mitigation, and prevention of cultured species dis-  
3           eases;

4           (5) to develop cost-effective feeds to optimize  
5           the sustainable use of protein and lipid sources origi-  
6           nating from wild fish, plants, and other sources,  
7           maximize growth and production performance of cul-  
8           tured species, prevent the spread of pathogens and  
9           parasites, and maintain the human health benefits of  
10          cultured seafood;

11          (6) to improve techniques for monitoring, as-  
12          sessing, and addressing environmental impacts of  
13          offshore aquaculture and develop and evaluate meth-  
14          odologies to prevent, minimize, and mitigate poten-  
15          tial adverse environmental impacts;

16          (7) to evaluate the potential for offshore aqua-  
17          culture to serve as a tool for environmental manage-  
18          ment, including connections to water quality, water-  
19          shed management, and fishery conservation and  
20          management;

21          (8) to evaluate the potential impact of offshore  
22          aquaculture on the economies of coastal commu-  
23          nities, particularly those dependent on traditional  
24          fishery resources;



1           (9) to identify barriers to entry in the offshore  
2           aquaculture industry and propose solutions to over-  
3           come them;

4           (10) to study the traditional aquaculture meth-  
5           ods and practices of Native Americans, Alaska Na-  
6           tives, and Native Hawaiians to evaluate economic,  
7           environmental, and sociological impacts;

8           (11) to investigate other priority issues identi-  
9           fied by the Secretary; and

10          (12) to evaluate economic aspects of offshore  
11          aquaculture, including production costs and market  
12          development.

13          (c) COORDINATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL PRO-  
14          GRAMS.—The Secretary shall—

15               (1) coordinate aquaculture research and devel-  
16               opment intramural programs and grants within the  
17               Department of Commerce and with other Federal in-  
18               tramural and extramural programs that provide  
19               grant funding for purposes similar to those under  
20               subsection (b), such as grants administered by the  
21               National Sea Grant College Program and the Na-  
22               tional Institute of Standards and Technology; and

23               (2) coordinate the research and development  
24               grant program established in this section with the  
25               interagency aquaculture coordinating group estab-

1       lished under section 6 of the National Aquaculture  
2       Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 2805) and with the research  
3       and development conducted through the Cooperative  
4       Extension System of the Department of Agriculture.

5       (d) COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AGREEMENT.—To  
6       carry out this section, the Secretary may enter into a coop-  
7       erative agreement with a State, institution of higher edu-  
8       cation, or other private institution or research center.

9       **SEC. 204. ECONOMIC SOUNDNESS.**

10       (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 53708 of title 46, United  
11       States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
12       lowing:

13       “(f) AQUACULTURE.—In making the findings under  
14       subsections (a) and (b), the Administrator and the Sec-  
15       retary may take into account factors such as—

16               “(1) the transferability of an aquaculture per-  
17       mit;

18               “(2) an assessment of the shore-side seafood  
19       economy where the borrower will be operating; and

20               “(3) the existence of a formal technical assist-  
21       ance program administered by a governmental agen-  
22       cy.”.

1           **TITLE III—REFINEMENTS**

2   **SEC. 301. RECORDKEEPING, INSPECTIONS, AND ACCESS TO**  
3                           **INFORMATION.**

4           (a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary, after consulta-  
5 tion with other interested Federal departments and agen-  
6 cies, shall prescribe by regulation—

7                   (1) the records that an offshore aquaculture  
8 permit holder is required to establish and maintain;

9                   (2) the reports that an offshore aquaculture  
10 permit holder is required to make;

11                  (3) the information that an offshore aqua-  
12 culture permit holder is required to provide, which  
13 shall at a minimum include—

14                           (A) data regarding escape events;

15                           (B) the prevalence of disease in the off-  
16 shore aquaculture facility, including a descrip-  
17 tion of veterinary services provided for treat-  
18 ment;

19                           (C) a copy of any required incident or an-  
20 nual report required under a permit necessary  
21 for aquaculture operations under other Federal  
22 law; and

23                           (D) other information, as the Secretary  
24 may require; and

1           (4) any other recordkeeping that an offshore  
2           aquaculture permit holder is required to satisfy, as  
3           necessary to carry out this Act.

4           (b) REGULATORY CONSISTENCY.—The regulations  
5           under subsection (a) may not amend, contradict, or dupli-  
6           cate regulations under any other Federal law.

7           (c) RECORDKEEPING.—An offshore aquaculture per-  
8           mit holder shall—

9           (1) comply with the recordkeeping regulations  
10          under subsection (a); and

11          (2) submit such reports, and make such records  
12          and information available as the Secretary may re-  
13          quest.

14          (d) INSPECTIONS.—

15          (1) FREQUENCY.—The Secretary shall conduct  
16          an annual inspection of offshore aquaculture facili-  
17          ties.

18          (2) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide rea-  
19          sonable notice prior to site inspections at offshore  
20          aquaculture facilities pursuant to paragraph (1).  
21          The Secretary shall take into consideration biosecu-  
22          rity concerns and work with the permit holder to en-  
23          sure best inspection practices to ensure safety and  
24          protect cultured species.

1           (3) FACILITIES LOCATED ON THE OUTER CON-  
2           TINENTAL SHELF.—The Secretary of the Interior, or  
3           a designee of such Secretary, is authorized with in-  
4           spection authority under this section for offshore  
5           aquaculture facilities located on the outer conti-  
6           nental shelf.

7           (e) GOVERNMENT ACCESS.—Any Federal Govern-  
8           ment official representing an agency with authority for im-  
9           plementing and enforcing Federal law applicable to off-  
10          shore aquaculture shall have reasonable access to an off-  
11          shore aquaculture facility for which a permit is issued  
12          under this Act for the purpose of enforcing the Federal  
13          law under the official's jurisdiction or otherwise carrying  
14          out the official's responsibilities. Such an official, relative  
15          to their jurisdictional authority, may inspect, at reason-  
16          able times, appropriate records, files, papers, permits,  
17          processes, controls, and the offshore aquaculture facility  
18          and may test any feature of the offshore aquaculture facil-  
19          ity, provided testing does not risk incurring damage or po-  
20          tentially compromise the structural integrity of the facility  
21          or the health of cultured species. Each inspection shall be  
22          conducted with reasonable promptness. The permit holder  
23          shall receive timely notification, in writing, of the results  
24          of the inspection.

1 (f) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The Secretary shall make re-  
2 ports and other information received under this Act avail-  
3 able to the public unless the Secretary determines it is  
4 necessary to withhold disclosure to protect confidential  
5 business information or sensitive personal information.  
6 The Secretary shall establish procedures to protect con-  
7 fidential business information and sensitive personal infor-  
8 mation from being disclosed.

9 **SEC. 302. MARINE FEED STANDARDS.**

10 (a) RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.—Nothing in this  
11 Act shall be construed in derogation of applicable law re-  
12 garding the production of animal feed, and offshore aqua-  
13 culture operations shall comply with all applicable law (in-  
14 cluding regulations).

15 (b) REQUIREMENTS FOR FISHERIES-DERIVED MA-  
16 RINE FEED INGREDIENTS.—The Secretary shall require  
17 that fish meal, or any fisheries-derived marine feed ingre-  
18 dients (both first-use and trimmings), used at offshore  
19 aquaculture facilities in the exclusive economic zone—

20 (1) are sourced from a sustainably managed  
21 fishery for aquaculture feed;

22 (2) employ traceability sufficient to credibly  
23 demonstrate the ingredients were sourced from a  
24 sustainably managed fishery for aquaculture feed;

1           (3) are harvested and produced without convict,  
2           forced, or indentured labor; and

3           (4) are delivered to the cultured species as part  
4           of a formulated feed.

5           (c) STUDY ON BEST PRACTICES FOR MARINE  
6 FEED.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enact-  
7 ment of the Advancing the Quality and Understanding of  
8 American Aquaculture Act, the Secretaries of Commerce  
9 and Agriculture, through the coordinating group, shall  
10 conduct a study of the best management practices related  
11 to sustainable, economic feed for the United States marine  
12 aquaculture industry. The study shall—

13           (1) recommend best practices for sourcing fish  
14           meal from sustainably managed fisheries for aqua-  
15           culture feed;

16           (2) recommend best practices to provide  
17           traceability on the source of fish meal ingredients;

18           (3) recommend best practices for sourcing for-  
19           mulated feed ingredients from domestic sources; and

20           (4) recommend best practices for harvesting  
21           and producing fish meal so that it can be known  
22           that it is harvested and produced without convict,  
23           forced, or indentured labor.

24           (d) REPORT.—Upon completion of the study under  
25 subsection (c), the Secretaries of Commerce and Agri-

1 culture shall prepare and submit a report containing the  
2 recommendations described in subsection (c) to the Com-  
3 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the  
4 Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the  
5 House of Representatives.

6 **SEC. 303. MARINE USE RIGHTS.**

7 The permit established under section 202 shall be  
8 considered a marine use right, offering security of tenure  
9 for purpose of obtaining investment, transferring permit  
10 to other authorized users, and allowing for operations.

11 **TITLE IV—ADMINISTRATIVE**  
12 **PROVISIONS**

13 **SEC. 401. OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE.**

14 (a) OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE.—The Secretary shall  
15 establish and provide resources for—

16 (1) an Office of Aquaculture within the Na-  
17 tional Marine Fisheries Service at the National Oce-  
18 anic and Atmospheric Administration headquarters  
19 to implement this title; and

20 (2) an Office of Aquaculture presence in each  
21 of the regional fisheries offices of the National Oce-  
22 anic and Atmospheric Administration, which pres-  
23 ence shall, at a minimum, be sufficient to fulfill the  
24 duties under subsection (b), but may be increased to



1 the extent warranted by the activity and interest of  
2 aquaculture stakeholders in the region.

3 (b) OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE DUTIES.—The Office  
4 of Aquaculture shall—

5 (1) ensure the implementation of this Act;

6 (2) coordinate regulatory, scientific, outreach,  
7 and international issues related to aquaculture with-  
8 in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-  
9 tration;

10 (3) collaborate with and leverage existing ef-  
11 forts by the National Sea Grant College program  
12 to—

13 (A) conduct aquaculture outreach, edu-  
14 cation, extension services, and training efforts;  
15 and

16 (B) engage with aquaculture stakeholders  
17 and, from time to time, convene conferences for  
18 aquaculture stakeholders to exchange informa-  
19 tion and ideas; and

20 (4) maintain aquaculture capacity in each of  
21 the regional fisheries offices of the National Oceanic  
22 and Atmospheric Administration, including at least  
23 one Regional Aquaculture Coordinator in each such  
24 office.

1           (c) **AQUACULTURE RESEARCH PROGRAM AND DU-**  
2 **TIES.**—In addition to the resources required under sub-  
3 section (a), the Secretary shall establish and provide addi-  
4 tional resources for an aquaculture research program that  
5 draws upon the scientific capacity of National Oceanic and  
6 Atmospheric Administration programs such as the Fish-  
7 eries Science Centers, Sea Grant, and the National Cen-  
8 ters for Coastal and Ocean Science to support the Office  
9 of Aquaculture's efforts to implement this title. Specifi-  
10 cally, the program shall—

11           (1) ensure that offshore aquaculture operations  
12 permitted under this title are scientifically monitored  
13 to support the implementation of this Act, evaluate  
14 data, and conduct additional research to support the  
15 development of sustainable offshore aquaculture in  
16 accordance with this title; and

17           (2) administer the research and development  
18 grant program under section 203.

19           (d) **AQUACULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE.**—The Marine  
20 Fisheries Advisory Committee shall designate the Aqua-  
21 culture Subcommittee as a permanent, standing sub-  
22 committee to serve as an external board to advise the Sec-  
23 retary on offshore aquaculture. The Aquaculture Sub-  
24 committee shall coordinate with the National Sea Grant  
25 Advisory Board, as appropriate.

1           (e) BUDGET PRESENTATION.—The National Oceanic  
2 and Atmospheric Administration shall transmit its budget  
3 request for the Office of Aquaculture as a separate line  
4 with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

5 **SEC. 402. SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY.**

6           (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall support the  
7 development of sustainable marine aquaculture, consistent  
8 with this Act and other applicable Federal law.

9           (b) MARKETING AND PROMOTION GRANTS.—The  
10 Secretary shall, in consultation with industry, establish  
11 and administer a grant program to support the sale and  
12 public perception of cultured species domestically and  
13 internationally.

14           (c) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary  
15 shall, in consultation with industry, academic institutions,  
16 and the National Sea Grant College Program, develop and  
17 manage a grant program to support the education and  
18 training of individuals with the skills needed to manage  
19 and operate aquaculture facilities.

20           (d) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—The Secretary shall or-  
21 ganize through each regional fisheries office of the Na-  
22 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration a network  
23 of—

24                 (1) regional experts and Federal agency con-  
25           tacts, in coordination with relevant organizations

1 (including the National Sea Grant College Program  
2 under the National Sea Grant College Program Act  
3 (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.), the Department of Agri-  
4 culture Regional Aquaculture Centers, institutions of  
5 higher education, and the Cooperative Extension  
6 System of the Department of Agriculture) to provide  
7 technical expertise and extension services on offshore  
8 aquaculture and information on Federal permit re-  
9 quirements; and

10 (2) individuals and businesses interested in  
11 aquaculture operations and products to facilitate  
12 professional development, marketing, mentoring op-  
13 portunities, and agency outreach and education on  
14 aquaculture.

15 (e) AQUACULTURE DATABASE.—The Secretary shall  
16 establish and maintain within the Office of Aquaculture  
17 an aquaculture database. The aquaculture database shall  
18 include information on research, technologies, monitoring  
19 techniques, best practices, and advisory board rec-  
20 ommendations. The Secretary shall make the aquaculture  
21 database available in a manner that safeguards confiden-  
22 tial business information. The inclusion of information in  
23 the database under this subsection shall not be considered  
24 to be publication for purposes of subsection (a) or (b) of  
25 section 102 of title 35, United States Code.

1           (f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR OPERATORS.—The  
2 Secretary shall organize through the Office of Aquaculture  
3 and the Regional Aquaculture Coordinators, a program to  
4 provide technical assistance to operators in each regional  
5 fisheries office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
6 Administration. The programs shall be tailored to meet  
7 the unique needs of each region, but shall conduct indi-  
8 vidual consultations with each operator in the region on  
9 a regular basis to assess the status of the operator's busi-  
10 ness, and if appropriate, identify available resources to  
11 support the operator, such as regional experts, university  
12 extension agents, and grant opportunities.

13           (g) CAPITAL MARKETS.—

14           (1) OUTREACH TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.—

15           In order to enhance access to capital markets, the  
16 Secretary shall provide financial institutions and in-  
17 vestment firms with objective, science-based informa-  
18 tion on offshore aquaculture and the Federal regu-  
19 latory regime that governs it.

20           (2) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—In addition, the Sec-

21 retary shall provide economic analysis to answer  
22 queries regarding the value of offshore aquaculture  
23 assets to secure financing, such as equipment, gov-  
24 ernmental permits, inventory, and intellectual prop-  
25 erty.

1           (3) COLLABORATION.—In order to achieve the  
2           goals of this subsection, the Secretary is encouraged  
3           to collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture, the  
4           Secretary of the Treasury, and the regional networks  
5           established under subsection (d).

6 **SEC. 403. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION.**

7           The Secretary shall conduct outreach on sustainable  
8           offshore aquaculture to promote understanding, science-  
9           based decision making, and commercial adoption. The Sec-  
10          retary shall use appropriate means to engage—

- 11           (1) the general public;
- 12           (2) community leaders;
- 13           (3) governmental officials;
- 14           (4) the business community;
- 15           (5) the academic community; and
- 16           (6) the nonprofit sector.

17 **SEC. 404. ADMINISTRATION.**

18          (a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary—

- 19           (1) shall initiate a rulemaking process, not later  
20           than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act,  
21           after consulting with relevant Federal agencies,  
22           coastal States, federally recognized Indian Tribes  
23           within the meaning of such term in Executive Order  
24           13175 (65 Fed. Reg. 67249), the Commonwealth of  
25           Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the United States

1 Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the  
2 Northern Mariana Islands, Regional Fishery Man-  
3 agement Councils as established under section 302  
4 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and  
5 Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852), and interstate  
6 fisheries commissions to implement this Act, includ-  
7 ing—

8 (A) procedures to issue, modify, deny, re-  
9 voke, or suspend an offshore aquaculture per-  
10 mit in accordance with this Act;

11 (B) procedures to coordinate the offshore  
12 aquaculture permitting process, with similar or  
13 complementary activities administered by other  
14 Federal agencies, federally recognized Indian  
15 Tribes, and coastal States;

16 (C) procedures to monitor and evaluate  
17 permit compliance to verify and confirm compli-  
18 ance with the requirements of this Act;

19 (D) procedures to transfer an offshore  
20 aquaculture permit from an original permit  
21 holder to a person that meets the requirements  
22 under section 202;

23 (E) procedures to minimize conflicts with  
24 existing uses in the exclusive economic zone;

1 (F) procedures to consider public-private  
2 partnerships; and

3 (G) standards for determining what types  
4 of feed may be employed in an offshore aqua-  
5 culture facility in accordance with the require-  
6 ments of section 302;

7 (2) shall promulgate such additional regulations  
8 as are necessary and appropriate to carry out this  
9 Act; and

10 (3) may amend a regulation at any time.

11 (b) AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into  
12 and perform such contracts, leases, or cooperative agree-  
13 ments, and make and receive such grants or funds, as may  
14 be necessary to carry out this Act.

15 (c) USE OF CONTRIBUTED GOVERNMENTAL RE-  
16 SOURCES.—For enforcement under this Act, the Secretary  
17 may use, with consent and with or without reimbursement,  
18 and consistent with applicable law, the land, services,  
19 equipment, personnel, and facilities of—

20 (1) any department, agency, or instrumentality  
21 of the United States;

22 (2) any State, local government, Tribal govern-  
23 ment, territory, or possession (or any political sub-  
24 division thereof);

25 (3) any foreign government; or



1 (4) an international organization.

2 (d) AUTHORITY TO USE GRANT FUNDS.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under  
4 paragraph (2), the Secretary may apply for, accept,  
5 and obligate research grant funding from any Fed-  
6 eral source operating a competitive grant program if  
7 the funding furthers the purposes of this Act.

8 (2) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may not apply  
9 for, accept, or obligate any research grant funding  
10 under paragraph (1) if the granting agency lacks au-  
11 thority to grant funds to Federal agencies or for any  
12 purpose, or subject to any condition, that is prohib-  
13 ited by law or regulation.

14 (3) MATCHING GRANT FUNDS.—Appropriated  
15 funds may be used to satisfy a requirement to match  
16 grant funds with recipient agency funds, except that  
17 no grant may be accepted that requires a commit-  
18 ment in advance of appropriations.

19 (4) ACCOUNTS.—Funds received from a grant  
20 shall be deposited in the National Oceanic and At-  
21 mospheric Administration account that serves to ac-  
22 complish the purpose for which the grant was  
23 awarded.

24 (e) RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this  
25 Act shall be construed to displace, supersede, or limit the

1 jurisdiction, responsibilities, or rights of any Federal or  
2 State agency, or Indian Tribe or Alaska Native organiza-  
3 tion, under any Federal law or treaty.

4 **SEC. 405. REPORT AND PERMIT TERMS.**

5 (a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 5 years after the date  
6 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue a report  
7 to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee  
8 on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate  
9 and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House  
10 of Representatives regarding implementation of this Act.

11 The report shall include—

12 (1) the number of offshore aquaculture permits  
13 applied for, granted, denied, and retired, together  
14 with a brief description of the circumstances of each;

15 (2) any and all enforcement actions undertaken,  
16 and the disposition of each;

17 (3) the number of aquaculture opportunity  
18 areas established under section 102, together with a  
19 brief description of the circumstances of each;

20 (4) results from any grants awarded under this  
21 Act;

22 (5) the Secretary's assessment of the state of  
23 offshore aquaculture in the United States;

1           (6) the Secretary's assessment of United States  
2 offshore aquaculture in comparison to offshore aqua-  
3 culture in other nations; and

4           (7) the Secretary's recommendations to improve  
5 United States offshore aquaculture.

6           (b) DETERMINATION REGARDING PERMITS.—In ad-  
7 dition to the requirements of subsection (a), the Secretary  
8 may make the following determinations regarding permit  
9 terms for offshore aquaculture:

10           (1) The effect of shortening or lengthening per-  
11 mit terms on the risk of harm to the environment.

12           (2) The effect of shortening or lengthening per-  
13 mit terms on industry's access to capital markets.

14           (3) Whether a change to the permit terms es-  
15 tablished in this Act is warranted.

16 **SEC. 406. FEDERAL COORDINATION.**

17           (a) RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.—Nothing in this  
18 section shall be construed in derogation of law in effect  
19 on the date of enactment of this Act that is applicable  
20 to offshore aquaculture operations, and the unified permit-  
21 ting and review process established under this section shall  
22 not affect the timelines or standards established under  
23 other laws.

24           (b) COORDINATION.—Subject to subsection (a), the  
25 Secretary of Commerce shall coordinate with the Depart-

1 ment of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the  
2 Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of En-  
3 gineers, the Food and Drug Administration, and the de-  
4 partment in which the U.S. Coast Guard is operating to  
5 simplify the Federal permitting process for offshore aqua-  
6 culture. The Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture,  
7 Health and Human Services, and the department in which  
8 the U.S. Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of  
9 the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chief of  
10 Engineers shall cooperate with the Secretary of Commerce  
11 to implement this section.

12 (c) UNIFIED PERMITTING AND REVIEW PROCESS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
14 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries of  
15 Commerce, Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human  
16 Services, and the department in which the U.S.  
17 Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of the  
18 Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chief of  
19 Engineers shall, through the Secretary of Commerce,  
20 initiate, subject to the requirements of subsection  
21 (a), a rulemaking for all permits administered by  
22 such agency heads relating to offshore aquaculture  
23 for a unified process, public notice, and public com-  
24 ment for—

25 (A) initial issuance of permits;

1 (B) renewal of permits; and

2 (C) transfer of permits.

3 (2) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Commerce,  
4 through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
5 ministration, shall serve as the lead Federal agency  
6 for purposes of providing information on Federal  
7 permitting requirements for aquaculture in Federal  
8 waters.

9 (3) INFORMAL REVIEW AND COMPATIBILITY  
10 ANALYSIS.—The Secretary of Commerce, acting  
11 through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
12 ministration, shall convene representatives of the  
13 Department of the Interior, the Department of Agri-  
14 culture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the  
15 Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department in  
16 which the U.S. Coast Guard is operating to provide  
17 prospective permit applicants an opportunity for in-  
18 formal consultation with Federal agencies. The Sec-  
19 retary of Commerce may invite representatives from  
20 other Federal agencies as necessary or advisable.  
21 Nothing in this subsection shall preclude an appli-  
22 cant or a prospective applicant from contacting Fed-  
23 eral agencies directly.

24 (4) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.—To the extent  
25 allowable under the National Environmental Policy

1 Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), any environ-  
2 mental analysis or environmental impact statement  
3 required under such Act for offshore aquaculture ac-  
4 tivities shall be conducted through a single, consoli-  
5 dated environmental review and the National Oce-  
6 anic and Atmospheric Administration, through the  
7 Office of Aquaculture and associated divisions, shall  
8 serve as the lead Federal agency.

9 (5) COORDINATION OF PERMIT REVIEWS.—To  
10 the extent practicable under this Act and all other  
11 applicable laws and regulations, Federal agencies  
12 with permitting requirements applicable to offshore  
13 aquaculture facilities shall coordinate their review  
14 processes in order to provide a timely response to  
15 applicants.

16 **SEC. 407. PROHIBITED ACTS.**

17 It is unlawful for any person—

18 (1) to violate any provision of this Act or any  
19 regulation or permit issued pursuant to this Act;

20 (2) to refuse to permit any officer authorized to  
21 enforce the provisions of this Act (in accordance  
22 with section 408) to access an offshore aquaculture  
23 facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or other  
24 conveyance, subject to such person's control, for pur-

1 poses of conducting any search or inspection in con-  
2 nection with the enforcement of this Act;

3 (3) to assault, resist, oppose, impede, intimi-  
4 date, or interfere with any such authorized officer in  
5 the conduct of any search or inspection described in  
6 paragraph (2);

7 (4) to resist a lawful arrest for any act prohib-  
8 ited by this section;

9 (5) to ship, transport, offer for sale, sell, pur-  
10 chase, import, export, or have custody, control, or  
11 possession of, any cultured species produced, taken,  
12 retained, or possessed in violation of this Act;

13 (6) to interfere with, delay, or prevent, by any  
14 means, the apprehension or arrest of another person,  
15 knowing that such other person has committed any  
16 act prohibited by this section;

17 (7) to make or submit to the Secretary or the  
18 Governor of a State false information regarding any  
19 matter that the Secretary or Governor is considering  
20 in the course of carrying out this Act;

21 (8) to make any false statement or provide any  
22 false information on, or in connection with, an appli-  
23 cation, declaration, record, or report; or

1           (9) without authorization, to remove, damage,  
2           or tamper with or attempt to remove, damage, or  
3           tamper with—

4           (A) an offshore aquaculture facility owned  
5           by another person, which is located in the exclu-  
6           sive economic zone, including any component  
7           thereof; or

8           (B) cultured species contained in such fa-  
9           cility or component thereof.

10 **SEC. 408. ENFORCEMENT.**

11       (a) **RESPONSIBILITY.**—The provisions of this Act  
12 shall be enforced by the Secretary and the Secretary of  
13 the department in which the Coast Guard is operating.  
14 In enforcing this Act, such Secretaries may by agreement  
15 utilize, on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, the  
16 personnel, services, equipment (including aircraft and ves-  
17 sels), and facilities of any other Federal agency, including  
18 all elements of the Department of Defense, or of any State  
19 agency. Such Secretaries shall, and the head of any Fed-  
20 eral or State agency that has entered into an agreement  
21 with either such Secretary under this section may (if the  
22 agreement so provides), authorize officers to enforce the  
23 provisions of this Act or any regulation promulgated under  
24 this Act.



1 (b) POWERS OF AUTHORIZED OFFICERS.—Any offi-  
2 cer who is authorized under subsection (a) to enforce the  
3 provisions of this Act may, with or without a warrant or  
4 other process, as authorized by law—

5 (1) arrest any person, if the officer has reason-  
6 able cause to believe that such person has committed  
7 an act prohibited by section 407;

8 (2) board, search or inspect, any offshore aqua-  
9 culture facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or  
10 other conveyance (including its gear, furniture, ap-  
11 purtenances, stores, records, and cargo) which is  
12 subject to the provisions of this Act;

13 (3) seize any vessel, or other conveyance (to-  
14 gether with its gear, furniture, appurtenances,  
15 stores, records, and cargo) used or employed in, or  
16 with respect to which it reasonably appears that  
17 such vessel was used or employed in, the violation of  
18 any provision of this Act;

19 (4) seize any cultured species or seafood prod-  
20 uct (wherever found) taken, produced, imported, ex-  
21 ported, transported, sold, received, acquired, or pur-  
22 chased in any manner, in connection with or as a re-  
23 sult of the violation of any provision of this Act;

24 (5) seize any evidence related to any violation  
25 of any provision of this Act;

1           (6) detain any cultured species or seafood prod-  
2           uct to determine compliance with this Act;

3           (7) search and seize, in accordance with any  
4           guidelines which may be issued by the Attorney Gen-  
5           eral;

6           (8) access, directly or indirectly, for enforce-  
7           ment purposes any data or information required to  
8           be provided or reported under this Act or regulations  
9           promulgated under this Act, including data from  
10          vessel or facility monitoring systems, automatic iden-  
11          tification systems, long-range identification and  
12          tracking systems, or any similar system;

13          (9) execute and serve any subpoena, arrest war-  
14          rant, search warrant issued in accordance with Rule  
15          41 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, or  
16          other warrant or civil or criminal process issued by  
17          any officer or court of competent jurisdiction; and

18          (10) exercise any other lawful authority.

19          (c) ISSUANCE OF CITATIONS.—If any authorized offi-  
20          cer finds that a person, offshore aquaculture facility, asso-  
21          ciated onshore facility, vessel, or other conveyance is en-  
22          gaging or has been engaged in the violation of any provi-  
23          sion of this Act, such officer may issue a citation to the  
24          owner or operator of such vessel in lieu of proceeding  
25          under subsection (f), (g), or (h). If a permit has been

1 issued pursuant to this Act for such facility or conveyance,  
2 such officer shall note the issuance of any citation under  
3 this subsection, including the date thereof and the reason  
4 therefor, on the permit. The Secretary shall maintain a  
5 record of all citations issued pursuant to this subsection.

6 (d) SUBPOENAS.—For the purposes of conducting  
7 any investigation or hearing under this Act, or any other  
8 marine resource law enforced by the Secretary, the Sec-  
9 retary may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testi-  
10 mony of witnesses and the production of relevant papers,  
11 photographs, records, books, and documents in any form,  
12 including those in electronic, optical or magnetic form, and  
13 may administer oaths. Witnesses summoned shall be paid  
14 the same fees and mileage that are paid to witnesses in  
15 the courts of the United States. In case of contempt or  
16 refusal to obey a subpoena served upon any person pursu-  
17 ant to this subsection, the district court of the United  
18 States for any district in which such person is found, re-  
19 sides, or transacts business, upon application by the  
20 United States and after notice to such person, shall have  
21 jurisdiction to issue an order requiring such person to ap-  
22 pear and give testimony before the Secretary or to appear  
23 and produce documents before the Secretary, or both, and  
24 any failure to obey such order of the court may be pun-  
25 ished by such court as a contempt thereof.

1           (e) DISTRICT COURT JURISDICTION.—The several  
2 district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction  
3 over any actions arising under this Act. For purposes of  
4 this section, for Hawaii or any possession of the United  
5 States in the Pacific Ocean, the appropriate court is the  
6 United States District Court for the District of Hawaii,  
7 except that in the case of Guam and Wake Island, the  
8 appropriate court is the United States District Court for  
9 the District of Guam, and in the case of the Northern  
10 Mariana Islands, the appropriate court is the United  
11 States District Court for the District of the Northern  
12 Mariana Islands. Each violation shall be a separate of-  
13 fense and the offense shall be deemed to have been com-  
14 mitted not only in the district where the violation first oc-  
15 curred, but also in any other district as authorized by law.  
16 Any offenses not committed in any district are subject to  
17 the venue provisions of section 3238 of title 18, United  
18 States Code.

19           (f) CIVIL ENFORCEMENT.—

20               (1) CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES.—

21                   (A) IN GENERAL.—Any person who is  
22 found by the Secretary, after notice and oppor-  
23 tunity for a hearing in accordance with section  
24 554 of title 5, United States Code, to have com-  
25 mitted an act prohibited by section 407 shall be

1           liable to the United States for a civil penalty.  
2           The amount of the civil penalty shall not exceed  
3           \$37,500 for each violation. Each day of a con-  
4           tinuing violation shall constitute a separate of-  
5           fense. The amount of such civil penalty shall be  
6           assessed by the Secretary, by written notice. In  
7           determining the amount of such penalty, the  
8           Secretary shall take into account the nature,  
9           circumstances, extent, and gravity of the pro-  
10          hibited acts committed and, with respect to the  
11          violation, the degree of culpability, any history of  
12          prior offenses, and such other matters as jus-  
13          tice may require. In assessing such penalty the  
14          Secretary may also consider any information  
15          provided by the violator relating to the ability  
16          of the violator to pay, provided that the infor-  
17          mation is served on the Secretary at least 30  
18          days prior to an administrative hearing.

19                   (B) COMPROMISE OR OTHER ACTION BY  
20                   SECRETARY.—The Secretary may compromise,  
21                   modify, or remit, with or without conditions,  
22                   any civil administrative penalty which is or may  
23                   be imposed under this subsection and that has  
24                   not been referred to the Attorney General for  
25                   further enforcement action.

1           (2) IN REM JURISDICTION.—An offshore aqua-  
2           culture facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or  
3           other conveyance (including its gear, furniture, ap-  
4           purtenances, stores, records, and cargo) used in the  
5           commission of an act prohibited by section 407 shall  
6           be liable in rem for any civil penalty assessed for  
7           such violation under this section and may be pro-  
8           ceeded against in any district court of the United  
9           States having jurisdiction thereof.

10           (3) COLLECTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PEN-  
11           ALTIES.—If any person fails to pay an assessment  
12           of a civil penalty under paragraph (1) after it has  
13           become a final and unappealable order, the Sec-  
14           retary shall refer the matter to the Attorney Gen-  
15           eral, who shall recover the amount assessed (plus in-  
16           terest at current prevailing rates from the date of  
17           the final order) in any appropriate district court of  
18           the United States. In such action, the validity and  
19           appropriateness of the final order imposing the civil  
20           penalty shall not be subject to review. Any person  
21           who fails to pay, on a timely basis, the amount of  
22           an assessment of a civil penalty shall be required to  
23           pay, in addition to such amount and interest, attor-  
24           ney's fees and costs for collection proceedings and a  
25           quarterly nonpayment penalty for each quarter dur-

1       ing which such failure to pay persists. Such non-  
2       payment penalty shall be in an amount equal to 20  
3       percent of the aggregate amount of such person's  
4       penalties and nonpayment penalties that are unpaid  
5       as of the beginning of such quarter.

6               (4) PERMIT SANCTIONS.—

7               (A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to any  
8       case in which an offshore aquaculture facility,  
9       associated onshore facility, vessel, or other con-  
10      veyance was used in the commission of an act  
11      prohibited under section 407, the owner or op-  
12      erator of an offshore aquaculture facility, asso-  
13      ciated onshore facility, vessel, or other convey-  
14      ance (or any other person who has been issued  
15      or has applied for a permit under this Act) has  
16      acted in violation of section 407, or any civil  
17      penalty, criminal fine, or amount in settlement  
18      of a civil forfeiture imposed under this Act on  
19      a person, offshore aquaculture facility, associ-  
20      ated onshore facility, vessel, or other convey-  
21      ance that has been issued or has applied for a  
22      permit under this Act has not been paid and is  
23      overdue, the Secretary may—

24                   (i) revoke any permit issued with re-  
25                   spect to such person, offshore aquaculture

1 facility, associated onshore facility, vessel,  
2 other conveyance, with or without preju-  
3 dice to the issuance of subsequent permits;

4 (ii) suspend such permit for a period  
5 of time considered by the Secretary to be  
6 appropriate;

7 (iii) deny such permit; or

8 (iv) impose additional conditions and  
9 restrictions on such permit.

10 (B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In imposing a  
11 sanction under this paragraph, the Secretary  
12 shall take into account the nature, cir-  
13 cumstances, extent, and gravity of the prohib-  
14 ited acts for which the sanction is imposed and,  
15 with respect to the violator, the degree of culpa-  
16 bility, any history of prior offenses, and such  
17 other matters as justice may require.

18 (C) EFFECT OF TRANSFER OF OWNER-  
19 SHIP.—Transfer of ownership of an offshore  
20 aquaculture facility, associated onshore facility,  
21 vessel, or other conveyance, by sale or other-  
22 wise, shall not extinguish any permit sanction  
23 that is in effect or is pending at the time of  
24 transfer of ownership. Before executing the  
25 transfer of ownership of a facility or convey-



1           ance, by sale or otherwise, the owner shall dis-  
2           close in writing to the prospective transferee the  
3           existence of any permit sanction that will be in  
4           effect or pending with respect to the facility or  
5           conveyance at the time of the transfer.

6           (D) PAYMENT OF PENALTY OR FINE.—In  
7           the case of any permit that is suspended under  
8           this paragraph for nonpayment of a civil pen-  
9           alty or criminal fine, the Secretary shall rein-  
10          state the permit upon payment of the penalty  
11          or fine and interest thereon at the prevailing  
12          rate.

13          (E) HEARING.—No sanction shall be im-  
14          posed under this paragraph unless there has  
15          been a prior opportunity for a hearing on the  
16          facts underlying the violation for which the  
17          sanction is imposed, either in conjunction with  
18          a civil penalty proceeding under this section or  
19          otherwise.

20          (5) REVIEW OF CIVIL PENALTY.—Any person  
21          against whom a civil penalty is assessed under this  
22          subsection or against whom a permit sanction is im-  
23          posed under this subsection (other than a permit  
24          suspension for nonpayment of penalty or fine) may  
25          obtain review thereof in the United States district

1 court for the appropriate district by filing a com-  
2 plaint against the Secretary in such court within 30  
3 days from the date of such order that constitutes a  
4 final agency action. The Secretary shall promptly  
5 file in such court a certified copy of the record upon  
6 which such violation was found or such penalty im-  
7 posed, as provided in section 2112 of title 28,  
8 United States Code. The findings and order of the  
9 Secretary shall be set aside by such court if they are  
10 not found to be supported by substantial evidence,  
11 as provided in section 706(2) of title 5, United  
12 States Code.

13 (6) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—Upon the request of  
14 the Secretary, the Attorney General of the United  
15 States may commence a civil action for appropriate  
16 relief, including a permanent or temporary injunc-  
17 tion, for any violation of this Act (including regula-  
18 tions).

19 (g) FORFEITURE.—

20 (1) CRIMINAL FORFEITURE.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—A person who is con-  
22 victed of an offense in violation of this Act shall  
23 forfeit to the United States—

24 (i) any property, real or personal, con-  
25 stituting or traceable to the gross proceeds

1 taken, obtained, or retained, in connection  
2 with or as a result of the offense, includ-  
3 ing, without limitation, any cultured spe-  
4 cies (or the fair market value thereof); and  
5 (ii) any property, real or personal,  
6 used or intended to be used, in any man-  
7 ner, to commit or facilitate the commission  
8 of the offense, including, without limita-  
9 tion, any vessel (including the vessel's  
10 equipment, stores, catch and cargo), vehi-  
11 cle, aircraft, or other means of transpor-  
12 tation.

13 (B) APPLICABILITY OF CONTROLLED SUB-  
14 STANCES ACT.—Pursuant to section 2461(c) of  
15 title 28, United States Code, the provisions of  
16 section 413 of the Controlled Substances Act  
17 (21 U.S.C. 853) other than subsection (d)  
18 thereof shall apply to criminal forfeitures under  
19 this section.

20 (2) CIVIL FORFEITURE.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—The property set forth  
22 below shall be subject to administrative or judi-  
23 cial forfeiture to the United States in accord-  
24 ance with the provisions of chapter 46 of title

1 18, United States Code, and no property right  
2 shall exist in it:

3 (i) Any property, real or personal,  
4 constituting or traceable to the gross pro-  
5 ceeds taken, obtained, or retained, in con-  
6 nection with or as a result of a violation of  
7 this Act, including, without limitation, any  
8 fish (or the fair market value thereof).

9 (ii) Any property, real or personal,  
10 used or intended to be used, in any man-  
11 ner, to commit or facilitate the commission  
12 of a violation of this Act, including, with-  
13 out limitation, any vessel (including the  
14 vessel's equipment, stores, catch and  
15 cargo), vehicle, aircraft, or other means of  
16 transportation.

17 (B) APPLICATION OF THE CUSTOMS  
18 LAWS.—All provisions of law relating to seizure,  
19 summary judgment, and forfeiture and con-  
20 demnation for violation of the customs laws, the  
21 disposition of the property forfeited or con-  
22 demned or the proceeds from the sale thereof,  
23 the remission or mitigation of such forfeitures,  
24 and the compromise of claims shall apply to sei-  
25 zures and forfeitures incurred, or alleged to

1           have been incurred, under the provisions of this  
2           Act, insofar as applicable and not inconsistent  
3           with the provisions hereof. For seizures and for-  
4           feitures of property under this section by the  
5           Secretary, such duties as are imposed upon the  
6           customs officer or any other person with respect  
7           to the seizure and forfeiture of property under  
8           the customs law may be performed by such offi-  
9           cers as are designated by the Secretary or,  
10          upon request of the Secretary, by any other  
11          agency that has authority to manage and dis-  
12          pose of seized property.

13                 (C) PRESUMPTION.—For the purposes of  
14                 this section there is a rebuttable presumption  
15                 that all cultured species, or components thereof,  
16                 found in an offshore aquaculture facility or on  
17                 board a vessel or other conveyance that is used  
18                 or seized in connection with a violation of this  
19                 Act were produced, taken, obtained, trans-  
20                 ported, or retained in violation of this Act.

21                 (h) CRIMINAL ENFORCEMENT.—

22                         (1) IMPRISONMENT.—Any person (other than a  
23                         foreign government agency, or entity wholly owned  
24                         and controlled by a foreign government) who know-  
25                         ingly commits any act prohibited under section 407

1 shall be imprisoned for not more than 5 years or  
2 fined not more than \$500,000 for individuals or  
3 \$1,000,000 for an organization, or both, except that,  
4 if in the commission of any such offense the indi-  
5 vidual uses a dangerous weapon, engages in conduct  
6 that causes bodily injury to any officer authorized to  
7 enforce the provisions of this Act, or places any such  
8 officer in fear of imminent bodily injury, the max-  
9 imum term of imprisonment is not more than 10  
10 years.

11 (2) FINE AND IMPRISONMENT.—Any person  
12 (other than a foreign government agency, or entity  
13 wholly owned and controlled by a foreign govern-  
14 ment) who violates a provision under section 407  
15 and who, in the exercise of due care should know  
16 that such person's conduct violates such provision,  
17 shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, or  
18 imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

19 (i) JOINT ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENTS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Governor of an eligible  
21 State may apply to the Secretary for execution of a  
22 joint enforcement agreement with the Secretary that  
23 will authorize the deputization and funding of State  
24 law enforcement officers with marine law enforce-  
25 ment responsibilities to perform duties of the Sec-

1       retary relating to law enforcement provisions under  
2       this title or any other marine resource law enforced  
3       by the Secretary. Upon receiving an application  
4       meeting the requirements of this subsection, the Sec-  
5       retary may enter into a joint enforcement agreement  
6       with the requesting State.

7               (2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—A State is eligible to  
8       participate in the cooperative enforcement agree-  
9       ments under this section if it is in, or bordering on,  
10      the Atlantic Ocean (including the Caribbean Sea),  
11      the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the Gulf of  
12      Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the  
13      Great Lakes.

14              (3) REQUIREMENTS.—Joint enforcement agree-  
15      ments executed under paragraph (1)—

16                   (A) shall be consistent with the purposes  
17                   and intent of this section to the extent applica-  
18                   ble to the regulated activities;

19                   (B) may include specifications for joint  
20                   management responsibilities as provided by the  
21                   first section of Public Law 91-412 (15 U.S.C.  
22                   1525); and

23                   (C) shall provide for confidentiality of data  
24                   and information submitted to the State under  
25                   this Act.

1           (4) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary  
2 shall include in each joint enforcement agreement an  
3 allocation of funds to assist in management of the  
4 agreement. The allocation shall be fairly distributed  
5 among all eligible States participating in cooperative  
6 enforcement agreements under this subsection, based  
7 upon consideration of Federal marine enforcement  
8 needs, the specific marine conservation enforcement  
9 needs of each participating eligible State, and the  
10 capacity of the State to undertake the marine en-  
11 forcement mission and assist with enforcement  
12 needs. The agreement may provide for amounts to  
13 be withheld by the Secretary for the cost of any  
14 technical or other assistance provided to the State  
15 by the Secretary under the agreement.

16 **SEC. 409. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17       There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-  
18 retary for the purpose of carrying out this Act—

- 19           (1) \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;  
20           (2) \$65,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;  
21           (3) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;  
22           (4) \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and  
23           (5) \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.