

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

June 29, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to you regarding President Trump's May 7, 2020 Executive Order titled, "Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth," which directs you to identify aquaculture opportunity areas in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ). As you seek to identify such areas, we request your consideration of designating waters near Florida as an aquaculture opportunity area.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has shined a new light on the need to promote domestic industries to help ensure that Americans have consistent access to necessities, including various food commodities. The fact that most of the seafood consumed by Americans is imported from other countries lends uncertainty to the prospects of a stable supply of seafood in the future. As China has severely depleted its own fish stocks, it has turned to plundering the waters of other nations, putting fish stocks at risk globally. Aquaculture is poised to be an aspect of any solution to address these issues, and President Trump's Executive Order is a major step in the right direction towards securing domestic food resources and access for Americans to nutritious seafood.

In pursuit of a more resilient domestic food supply chain, we hope you agree that Florida is a common-sense option for one of the first aquaculture opportunity areas under the Executive Order. With more than 1,300 miles of coastline, a significant portion of the U.S. EEZ in the Atlantic Ocean rests in the temperate waters near Florida. Our mild winter climate offers opportunities to harvest species of native tropical finfish year-round. Further, Florida is uniquely situated as a central location between the Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Seaboard, which helps ensure that seafood harvested in waters near Florida expeditiously reaches its end market and remains fresh.

We commend President Trump's leadership in working to ensure our economy works for Americans, instead of against them, and we look forward to the result of your department's hard work in advancing these priorities.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott  
U.S. Senator