



NH FOOD ALLIANCE

DRAFT
FISHERIES POLICY



POLICY PRIORITY: Ensure New Hampshire maintains a resilient fishing and seafood industry as environmental and economic climates change.

New Hampshire's commercial fishing industry is on life support. Constantly changing regulations, environmental dynamics, as well as fleet consolidation and “greying of the fleet” have put this iconic and historic industry in a precarious situation, threatening its very existence and the businesses and communities that depend on it. Ensuring a resilient fishing and seafood industry requires the New Hampshire fishing community to weather unpredictable shifts in social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Ensure New Hampshire residents have access to diverse and local seafood.

For New Hampshire residents to access diverse and local seafood, it needs to be conveniently available and affordable which will require:

- Encourage (Support) more Community Supported Fisheries type businesses. Assistance with marketing and communication to make consumers aware that such businesses exist and assistance with small business loans to encourage growth in this sector.
- Develop well funded Sustainable Seafood Programs. Assistance and state funding for support and development of the NH Fresh and Local Seafood brand that will assist in traceability and marketability of local seafood products.
- Establish statewide requirement for local seafood purchasing (e.g., 5% of State institutions' seafood purchases must be New Hampshire harvested seafood). While not exactly a requirement, this initiative by UNH could be a template for other institutions in NH as a way to set-up a legislative requirement. This initiative falls short in that it defines 'local' within a 250 mile radius which means very little is actually being purchased from NH fishermen.
- Secure funding for infrastructure repairs at the state's main commercial ports. Assist/support from NH legislature to set aside funds to repair and maintain the state's existing infrastructure.

Secure the long-term viability of New Hampshire's fisheries industry.

Due to the nationwide shortage of young fishermen throughout the country, but noticeably in the New England ground fishing arena, there is a need to unify young fishermen and women, (45 and under) to address this dilemma of the "graying of the fleet." Young fishermen and women need a voice, hope for the future and to come together to advocate for themselves.

- Conduct a statewide needs assessment for the fisheries sector.
- Secure funding to support young and new fishermen through training, permit banks, business training, low interest loans.
- Encourage exploration of more aquaculture opportunities including: shellfish, seaweed, finfish.

Background

New Hampshire's commercial fishing industry has been struggling for the last decade (Magnuson, 2015). Constantly changing regulations, slashed quotas, fleet consolidation, 'greying of the fleet' (Scyphers et al, 2019; A.P. 2009), as well as changing environmental dynamics due to the effects of climate change in the Gulf of Maine (Mills et al, 2013; Pershing et al., 2015), competition with low-cost imported seafood and continued consumer perception that the industry is environmentally unsustainable (Rosenberg, 2017), have put this iconic and historic industry in a precarious situation, threatening its very existence and the businesses and communities that depend on it. However, in recent years, there has been a shift in consumer values and interests pertaining to the seafood (and other foods) that they buy and eat. Consumers are particularly interested in traceability, a smaller carbon footprint, and the desire to connect more with where, how, and by whom their food is harvested. This is a welcome and hopeful opportunity, especially for New Hampshire's fishing industry; it has been well documented that fish, seaweed, and other aquatic animal species play an integral role in the world's economies, cultures, and health (UNCATD, 2018). Similarly well documented, is the importance of seafood as part of a healthy diet, providing essential vitamins, minerals, protein, and omega 3 fatty acids known to support childhood development and heart health (Hosomi et al, 2012).

By making New Hampshire harvested seafood more accessible and available to New Hampshire residents, the industry itself can begin to recover and become more resilient as more opportunities present themselves. To date, New Hampshire has little to no policy regarding wild harvest fisheries as an industry. There is legislation pertaining to fisheries management, food safety and handling, and buying and selling seafood. Currently missing is any legislation that supports the viability, sustainability, and resiliency of this industry including support for both legislative and financial. The total economic activity generated from New Hampshire's commercial fishing industry is currently estimated at \$106 million annually. It supports 5,000 full- and part-time jobs. According to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) logs, 180 New Hampshire boats had commercial fishing permits in 2009. The number of boats dropped by half from 2009 to 2010, while the value of New Hampshire's landings decreased by approximately 40% (NH Sea Grant, 2013).

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