



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



March 20, 2007

Letter to the Editor

The Globe missed a golden opportunity to help end public confusion about aquaculture ["Fishy Proposal from Commerce, March 18, 2007"]. Aquaculture, as a complement to wild fisheries, can ultimately benefit New England fishermen through stock replenishment and new job opportunities.

Research and technology advancements over the last three decades have solved many problems of the past regarding water pollution, aquatic animal health, use of fish meal and escapes. For example, vaccines have largely replaced antibiotics in aquaculture. The U.S. is the genesis of these technological advancements, but most have gone overseas - benefiting countries that embrace aquaculture.

The U.S. imports 80 percent of its seafood, half of which is farmed. Our seafood trade deficit is \$8 billion. We must expand domestic offshore aquaculture to meet growing consumer demand and reduce pressure on wild fisheries.

The Administration's aquaculture bill will reduce impediments to an emerging industry while ensuring stringent environmental protections, including protection of wild fisheries. The bill mandates us to establish specific environmental requirements, but the process of doing so begins with Congress. The Administration looks forward to working with Members of Congress and the public as we lay the foundation for a safe, sustainable offshore aquaculture industry.

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