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NOAA Holds Public Listening Sessions to Guide Drafting of New Aquaculture Policy

NOAA will hold six listening sessions in April and May to hear recommendations from the public that will help the agency develop a new national policy for sustainable marine aquaculture.

Marine aquaculture is the cultivation of marine organisms, such as shellfish and finfish, for food and other products. Aquaculture techniques are also widely used in the United States to help restore valuable wild fisheries and habitat, including oysters.

Dates for the listening sessions with NOAA officials are as follows:

- April 14 in Narragansett, R.I.
- April 19 in New Orleans, La.
- April 22 in Seattle
- April 27 in Honolulu
- April 29 in Menlo Park, Calif.
- May 6 a national call-in hosted by NOAA on a toll-free line

Details on the specific locations and times for the regional listening sessions and instructions for submitting comments electronically will be posted on the NOAA Aquaculture Program Web site <http://aquaculture.noaa.gov>. The agency also will accept public comment through the Web.

After the listening sessions, NOAA will analyze the public input and develop a draft national policy for review and public comment. Once that process is complete, the agency will issue the new NOAA aquaculture policy. NOAA's goal is to issue a new national policy that will enable sustainable marine aquaculture within the context of the agency's multiple ocean stewardship missions and broader social and economic goals.

Aquaculture supplies almost half of the world's seafood and a significant portion of future increases in the global seafood supply are expected to come from aquaculture. The United States is a major consumer of aquaculture products, but a minor producer. Currently, 84 percent of the nation's seafood is imported, and half of that is from aquaculture. U.S. aquaculture supplies about five percent of U.S. seafood.

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