

## SUMMARY REPORT FROM SEAFOOD COMMUNITY PARTNER-LED CONVENING TO INFORM THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HUNGER, NUTRITION, AND HEALTH

To the Task Force on the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health,

A group of leaders and stakeholders representing the U.S. seafood sector, fish and shellfish producers, processors, distributors and the communities that support them, convened a partner-led convening in July 2022. This broad seafood group met to help inform the Task Force on the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health as it works with the White House to craft a strategy to tackle hunger, nutrition and health issues. The group (to be referred to as "we" in this document) used the Toolkit for Partner-Led Convenings to discuss the five questions and offer solutions and ideas to address the pillars from the unified perspective of our diverse public and private sector organizations. We do not always agree on everything, but we put our heads together to help inform the Task Force about the vital and unique contribution that seafood brings to the American people. We offer diverse solutions to make sure that all Americans have access to delicious seafood and thereby benefit from seafood's health-promoting and protecting properties. We encourage the Task Force to include sustainable seafood as part of the nutrition and health strategy for the White House Conference and the strategic framework that is expected as an outcome. Our group and its members stand ready to help the White House make sustainable nutritious seafood accessible to all Americans.

The following seafood organizations took part in a live virtual partner-led convenor conference call:

- **Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI)** is a public-private partnership between the State of Alaska and the Alaska seafood industry established to foster economic development of a renewable natural resource. ASMI plays a key role in the positioning of Alaska's seafood industry as a competitive market-driven food production industry. ASMI conducts consumer campaigns, public relations and advertising activities, and aligns with industry efforts for maximum effectiveness. Learn more at [alaskaseafood.org](http://alaskaseafood.org). Represented on the call by: John Burrows, Seafood Technical Director, Bruce Schactler, Food Aid Program and Development Director; Nina Schlossman, PhD, President of Global Food & Nutrition and Nutrition & Food Aid Consultant for ASMI
- The Association of **Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers (GAPP)** is a nonprofit that advocates for one of the world's most sustainable and nutritious seafood products, U.S.-caught Wild Alaska Pollock. GAPP's mission is to build demand and awareness for the fish through driving product innovation, conducting research, and creating awareness about product quality and the responsibly managed fishery the product comes from. Learn more at [alaskapollock.org](http://alaskapollock.org). Represented on the call by: Craig Morris, CEO
- **National Fisheries Institute**, a non-profit organization dedicated to education about seafood safety, sustainability, and nutrition. Learn more at [aboutseafood.com](http://aboutseafood.com). Represented on the call by: Rima Kleiner, MS, RDN, Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist
- **Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA)**, is a nonprofit trade association that, since 1914, has represented the policy interests of seafood processing companies based in the State of Washington. PSPA's member companies operate processing facilities primarily located in Alaska and processing vessels operating in the North Pacific. The renewable harvest from Alaska's and Pacific Northwest's sustainable wild

Alaska salmon, pollock, crab, cod, halibut, and Pacific whiting (hake) fisheries approaches six billion pounds annually, and these fish are bought by processing companies that produce seafood products for delivery to seafood markets, restaurants, schools and other institutions, charitable outlets, and home cooks in the U.S. and around the world. Learn more at [pspafish.net](http://pspafish.net). Represented on the call by: Chris Barrows, President

- **Seafood Nutrition Partnership (SNP)**, a charitable 501(c)3 nonprofit that educates the public about the public health benefits of consuming seafood as recommended by prominent health organizations. Founded in 2013, SNP has convened the best available science expertise on seafood nutrition, strengthened seafood nutrition guidelines, conducts regional public health campaigns via grassroots outreach and digital communications, and provides educational resources for health influencers and consumers. Learn more at [seafoodnutrition.org](http://seafoodnutrition.org). Represented on the call by: Linda Cornish, President; Andrea Albersheim, Director of Communications
- **SeaShare** is a non-profit founded in 1994 to help the seafood industry donate to Feeding America food banks and feeding centers in the United States. SeaShare has donated over 250 million seafood servings to food banks in the past 28 years. Learn more at [seashare.org](http://seashare.org). Represented on the call by: Fiona Robinson, Development Director

Additionally, we opened up the discussion to the entire Seafood4Health Action Coalition<sup>i</sup> and additional partners, totaling more than 60 organizations that represent the full seafood supply chain from fishermen and seafood harvesters all the way to retailers and restaurants that provide healthy seafood options.

## INTRODUCTION

For improved public health, there is a need to include the value of seafood in the strategy being compiled in advance of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and for seafood to play a prominent role in that national strategy to end hunger, increase healthy eating, and reduce diet-related diseases. Visit [eatseafoodamerica.org](http://eatseafoodamerica.org) for information on how we can work together to inspire a healthier America through partnerships and outreach to raise awareness about the essential nutritional and associated health benefits of Americans eating more seafood. The seafood industry stands ready, by all means necessary, to support the White House in its ambitious goals and looks forward to additional discussion, as appropriate, with the White House and other advisors to further inform your strategy. We believe, collectively, that seafood can both inform and support the White House's efforts on many, if not all, of the below strategic pillars and this was the focus of our discussion.

### Addressing the Five Pillars

1. **Improve food access and affordability:** End hunger by making it easier for everyone — including urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities — to access and afford food. For example, expand eligibility for and increase participation in food assistance programs and improve transportation to places where food is available.
2. **Integrate nutrition and health:** Prioritize the role of nutrition and food security in overall health, including disease prevention and management, and ensure that our healthcare system addresses the nutrition needs of all people.
3. **Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices:** Foster environments that enable all people to easily make informed healthy choices, increase

access to healthy food, encourage healthy workplace and school policies, and invest in public messaging and education campaigns that are culturally appropriate and resonate with specific communities.

4. **Support physical activity for all:** Make it easier for people to be more physically active (in part by ensuring that everyone has access to safe places to be active), increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and conduct research on and measure physical activity.
5. **Enhance nutrition and food security research:** Improve nutrition metrics, data collection, and research to inform nutrition and food security policy, particularly on issues of equity, access, and disparities.

Below please find a summary of the discussion, which occurred during our convenor call and suggestions for resources, partnerships, and insights brought forward by the seafood industry partners on the call and thereafter.

### 1. How has hunger or diet-related disease impacted you, your family, or your community?

- America has a national health crisis with preventable diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health. **Cardiovascular disease (CVD)** is the leading cause of death in the United States and it is estimated that more than 877,500 Americans die of heart disease or stroke each year.<sup>ii</sup> The annual economic toll of CVD is approximately \$363 billion in healthcare costs and lost productivity.<sup>iii</sup> We know that heart disease is 80-90% preventable with proper diet, exercise and lifestyle modifications.<sup>iv, v</sup> Drs. Mozaffarian and Rimm found that eating approximately one to two servings of fatty fish a week—salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, or sardines—reduces the risk of dying from heart disease by 36%.<sup>vi</sup> Mozaffarian and Rimm evaluated potential costs of consuming the DGA-recommended 250 mg/d of EPA and DHA from fish. The daily cost was as low as 9 cents, or 63 cents/week. For combinations of different types of salmon; salmon and tuna; or salmon, tuna, anchovies, and sardines, the average cost was 37 cents/day (\$2.59/week) or less. Through education programs, such as WIChealth.org courses and recipes<sup>vii</sup> and the Eating Heart Healthy program, people at-risk for chronic preventable diseases can learn how to eat right within their budget. These cost-effective protein options should be made accessible to all Americans including in feeding programs. (Pillars 2 and 3)
  - **Underserved Community Feedback, SNP’s Eating Heart Healthy Story: Jacquie Boston**

Jacquie Boston is a graduate of SNP’s Eating Heart Healthy (EHH) 4-week nutrition intervention program for women at risk of heart disease and a resident of Roxbury Tenants of Harvard. “I wish I was taught the importance of good nutrition, especially seafood nutrition, for my children’s brain and heart health. After attending Seafood Nutrition Partnership’s nutrition education workshops in our community I now make sure my grandson eats seafood at least twice a week - and he loves it!” Jacquie loves the affordable seafood recipes and in addition to the heart health benefits she said she came out of her depression that she was feeling before attending the nutrition classes and now feels more energized. Learn more about the Eating Heart Healthy program in question 5, below. (Pillars 1, 2, 3, 5)

- **Food Bank client feedback** showing impact of food donations to those facing food insecurity, spring 2022, My Brother's Keeper, Easton, Mass. Shared with SeaShare to show appreciation for seafood donation:

“When I got my delivery yesterday, I literally cried with joy – just the sheer volume of food blew me away. Not just the volume, but the quality, and the healthy choices of the selections made. Super fresh produce, and tons of it. A gallon of milk. A dozen eggs. Meat and fish. Cheese, beans, rice, pasta, tomatoes, sauces. Things like corn on the cob, zucchini and squashes and carrots, and even fresh peaches! I was absolutely speechless. I am truly in awe of what you have done for me, and for so many other people and families who don't have the means to get the fresh, healthy food they need to feed themselves and their families. There is so much talk in the media about how impoverished families don't have access to, or the money for, healthy choices – your organization walks the walk, and does the work to make it happen. Thank you again, you are all amazing.” (Pillars 1, 2, 3, 5)

- **Depression and anxiety** are the most common mental health conditions in the world, and they are on the rise. The annual economic toll of Alzheimer's and dementia is approximately \$321 billion in healthcare costs, and projects to reach nearly \$1 trillion by 2050.<sup>viii</sup> Anxiety affects more than 19% of men and women in the United States.<sup>ix</sup> People who regularly eat fish are 20% less likely than their peers to have depression.<sup>x</sup> In fact, the American Psychiatric Association has endorsed the fatty acids in fish as an effective part of depression treatment.<sup>xi</sup> On a population level, studies show that depression is less common in countries where people eat more fish.<sup>xii,xiii</sup> Over the past 20 years, dozens of research studies with more than 20,000 cases have shown that eating 12 ounces of fish per week and/or consuming omega-3 supplements significantly reduces risk for major depression. (Pillar 2)

**2. What specific actions should the U.S. Federal government, including the Executive Branch and Congress, take to achieve each pillar? What are the opportunities and barriers to achieving the actions? Actions should include specific policy and/or programmatic ideas and changes as well as funding needs.**

- **Interagency Consultation and Coordination on incorporating seafood into this initiative:** NOAA Fisheries should be included in these discussions on access to healthy, nutritious food; placement of seafood in the Department of Commerce does not always facilitate seafood to be at the table in discussions around feeding Americans and the health benefits of increasing overall seafood consumption. Seafood faces an exceptional obstacle in how it is regulated and governed in the U.S. when compared to terrestrial protein sources. To summarize the complicated interagency landscape: NOAA regulates sustainable fisheries management and carries out key marine fish stock surveys. Yet once fish are harvested, NOAA's oversight and accountability of seafood as a commodity needing food supply chain support diminishes, although NOAA also serves as the repository of seafood trade data. The USDA has significant expertise, authority, and discretion in supporting U.S. food systems, including marketing support and purchase programs. There have been tangible benefits from USDA Section 32 purchase programs and some marketing grants, but other USDA support for seafood is often limited or constrained to only certain species of farmed fish. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is tasked with ensuring the safety of seafood products in trade, facilitating certifications that are necessary to meet sanitary and phytosanitary requirements and working with NOAA and the United States Trade Representative

(USTR) in doing so. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), along with FDA, are the gatekeepers that carry out seafood inspection and other monitoring and enforcement actions for seafood products crossing our border. DHS and the Department of Labor control seafood processors' access to seasonal visa guest workers. DHS's U.S. Coast Guard coordinates with NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement to ensure that fisheries, marine mammal, and endangered species management regulations are adhered to and a level playing field is maintained across vessels and facilities within the industry.

- While by no means simple, the same procedures and governance for domestically produced terrestrial proteins are far more streamlined, with dedicated agencies such as the USDA serving as primary governing and guiding entities. While the industry understands the institutional history underlying this situation, this complexity underscores the vital importance of interagency cooperation to serve the entire seafood supply chain, and how a single minor issue within one aspect can grind operations to a halt. An effort to ensure all relevant agencies are included in discussions of food policy and strategy to guarantee adequate consideration of all food types, including the domestic seafood supply. Inclusion of all relevant authorities will benefit all 5 pillars in terms of expedient and efficient actions.
- To secure our seafood supply in the U.S. for the public health benefit of all Americans, we need to continue to be a global leader in fisheries management and invest in the aquaculture sector in the U.S. The Federal Government should review the **seafood competitiveness strategy as outlined by the Department of Commerce and NOAA Fisheries** and make this a priority to address Pillars 1, 2, 3 and 5.
- **The Dietary Guidelines for Americans** impacts the health of every American and is the basis for all federal feeding programs, including the benefits available to those women and infants on WIC; the foods available to the diverse populations of the Child and Adults Care Feeding Program; and the children and adolescents that depend on good nutrition at school through the National School Lunch Program. Although the evidence shows that eating seafood at all life stages is critical, consumers, policymakers, and even many doctors are still confused about the benefits of seafood, particularly during pregnancy. The White House has the power to declare what the Dietary Guidelines allude to: the demonstrable health risk associated with eating seafood is not eating enough to reap the benefits. (Pillars 1, 2 and 3)
- **Federal Food Assistance Programs:** According to Feeding America, 1 in 8 Americans were food insecure in 2021. Racial disparities in food insecurity are significant: 1 in 5 black Americans was food insecure in 2021, compared with 1 in 9 white Americans. We believe one of the most significant ways the U.S. Federal Government can continue to impact hunger and nutrition is by ensuring that Federal food assistance purchasing and educational programs continue to and even expand their purchases of seafood and seafood-based products.

There have already been success stories here: the Wild Alaska Pollock industry, for example, is proud to have as one of its most significant customers the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), who makes purchases using Federal funds of foods that benefit both children through the National School Lunch Program and underserved, undernourished populations through food banks. This year alone, USDA has purchased

more than 17.6 million pounds at a value of almost \$57.5 million of U.S.-caught Wild Alaska Pollock in familiar forms including fish sticks, fish filets, and fish nuggets. The amount purchased this year marks the second highest purchase ever on a volume and value basis by USDA. Additional large volume purchases of pink salmon filets and cans, as well as sockeye salmon, in service of these programs has also served to expand the variety and types of seafood available. Continued purchases of this type, and extension to other species would provide essential nutrition from seafood to those in greatest need and provide a wider variety of healthy choices to suit a larger number of palates. Ensuring seafood is prominent in federal feeding programs and in schools will ensure that Pillar 3 is accomplished by safeguarding access for all Americans to one of the most nutritious proteins available: seafood. (Pillar 3)

However, additional steps may assist in better use of these programs:

- **Increase Product Inclusion:** There are many seafood products that would be ideal fits for the USDA's large variety of programs and fit a variety of consumer preferences, including shelf stable seafood products. However, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) must ask for these products and to direct the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to write the specifications for them. The current process for introducing a new product can be overly cumbersome to be effective for the U.S. seafood industry and its particularities. As an example, shelf stable seafood products, which are in demand in all programs, are now available in several new products which, though well received, have garnered little attention by the FNS. We recommend the process for seafood product inclusion and specifications must be retooled to better fit the realities of the seafood industry and focus on our healthy and nutritious products. (Pillar 1)
- **Mitigate Barriers to Access of Federal Programs:** Natural geographic barriers put Alaska and Hawaii at a disadvantage in terms of access to the USDA food support and fair access to their share of the nearly \$9 billion of food purchased by USDA in 2020. These two states are labeled as "off-shores" and are denied frozen products from all but the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Volume also is limited to full containers rather than the partials that the rest of the states enjoy; if their share is less than a full container and they cannot piggyback with another state, the share goes to zero. It is recommended that the set of rules and processes for Alaska and Hawaii be carefully reviewed and new solutions considered to address obstacles that limit access to all USDA food programs and products to the non-mainland states and territories and their food insecure residents. (Pillar 1)
- **Additional Inclusion of Fishermen and Processors in Federal Programs:** We recommend that additional Federal support programs such as the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion (FMLFP) and the new Regional Food System Partnerships Grants (RFSPG) programs, which provide needed help to the farm sector, be expanded to include the wild-capture seafood industry. At present, the USDA has scores of other programs that support various U.S. food producers, but which exclude U.S. seafood producers. Marketing, research, infrastructure, and product development are all offered to U.S. agriculture food producers, but equal entry or equivalent programs are not available to the wild U.S. seafood producers. A dedicated effort by the USDA to include U.S. seafood producers more comprehensively in programs that are successfully helping other U.S. food

producers would be invaluable to the U.S. seafood industry, its stakeholders, and communities that host U.S. seafood producers, and the public who deserves access to healthy and nutritious seafood.(Pillar 1)

- **Increased Availability of Federal Seafood Research Funding:** Seafood production's complicated governance and regulatory landscape has also led to asymmetric development of research grant programs which can be applied to seafood production. While many food producers have access to programs tailored to their commodity in amounts approaching \$1 million per project under a multitude of programs such as the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA), the seafood and fishery sector is primarily served in this regard by the NOAA Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. This program, though accomplished, operates with an award cap of \$300k for what are often multi-year projects aimed at product innovation, supply chain improvement, increasing consumer confidence, supply enhancement through improved utilization or waste recovery, attaining data on vital metrics like contamination in absence of other funding, and a myriad of others. This limitation of federal seafood research funds in comparison to peer programs also limits positive outcomes and innovations that will be vital for a full effort of the sector in service of Pillar 5.
- **Continued Refinement of Nutrition Messaging to Americans:** The general public needs to be educated about the essential health and nutritional benefits that come from eating seafood. Prominent organizations have recommended eating at least two servings of seafood per week for quite some time, including the USDA/HHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010, 2015, 2020; Food and Drug Administration from 2004 to today<sup>xiv</sup>; World Health Organization<sup>xv</sup>; and American Heart Association.<sup>xvi</sup> The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating at least two servings of seafood weekly for a healthy diet, but only 1 in 5 Americans follow the Guidelines according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.<sup>xvii</sup> In fact, despite the most recent iteration of The Dietary Guidelines for Americans placing a special emphasis on intake of seafood by pregnant women and very young children, moms-to-be in the United States eat on average 1.8 ounces of seafood per week compared to the dietary recommendation of 8-12 ounces of seafood per week. (Pillars 1, 2 and 3)

### **3. What specific actions should local, state, territory and Tribal governments; private companies; nonprofit and community groups; and others take to achieve each pillar?**

- **Increasing Refrigeration Capacity:** We believe more needs to be invested in refrigeration and freezer capacity at food banks. We also believe that investing in refrigeration capacity in food banks is critical to ensuring that Pillar 3 is accomplished. Oftentimes, food banks don't have sufficient refrigeration capacity to accommodate large donations or federal purchases of nutritious protein, like seafood, to be made as such items require refrigeration. Increasing refrigeration capacity would greatly aid in the ability of more seafood to be purchased and distributed through federal feeding programs and allow for greater private donations of such items to food banks across the U.S. Additionally, expanding product SKUs sought after through federal purchasing initiatives to include new and innovative seafood items that may not require refrigeration (jerky, canned products, dried products) would also increase access and availability. (Pillars 1 and 3)
- **Investment in Cooking and Training Resources:** We also believe there should be greater investment in cooking and training resources available at food banks and

schools. Through our own proprietary industry research, we know that one of the biggest barriers to seafood consumption is a lack of confidence in preparation, which stems from a lack of recipe ideas that are quick, convenient and foolproof. Organizations like GAPP, ASMI, SNP and others have developed a repository of recipes for both institutional (school) use and also recipes for use by the average American at home. We believe that partnering with organizations like ours to further disseminate and raise awareness of such recipe repositories will help consumers consider seafood options more often and increase their confidence in their ability to prepare it at home. Further, providing schools with added variety and menu ideas to utilize purchased products that they have access to through the National School Lunch Program will only increase the likelihood that more children will be exposed to seafood at school and grow up to include it in their daily diets. (Pillars 1 and 3)

- **Better Incentivize Seafood Donations by Private Companies:** The U.S. food bank industry needs 200 million pounds of seafood to align the food insecure with USDA dietary recommendations. SeaShare, which works with the seafood industry and other partners, has only been able to supply approximately 1.2 million pounds per year to Feeding America food banks. To meet White House Conference Pillars 1 and 2, private companies need more incentive to donate seafood, an expensive commodity, to meet Americans' nutrition needs. Additionally, Food Banks need additional capital to add processing and refrigeration capacity for increased seafood donations. Seafood has to be processed and donated in family-friendly packages, because food banks don't have space and HACCP-certified cold rooms to process large seafood donations. Capital funding for cold-processing rooms<sup>xviii</sup> in food banks would address Pillars 1 and 2.
- **Investment in Working Waterfront Infrastructure:** The U.S. has well managed wild capture fisheries and a growing aquaculture sector. Many of the fishermen and aquaculture farmers are small scale businesses that need assistance with investments in strengthening our working waterfronts to enable seafood to be brought safely from boat and aquaculture farms to processing and cold storage facilities. Strengthening this first chain in the supply chain will help ensure the security of the seafood supply for the American public. Consultation and coordination with the Department of Commerce and NOAA Fisheries is recommended to determine the needs of the infrastructure requirements to secure our seafood supply chain. (Pillar 1)

#### **4. What are opportunities for public- and private-sector partners to work together to achieve each pillar?**

- **Promote the Public Health Benefits of Seafood Collaboratively as an Industry in a Public-Private Partnership to Consumers:** How Americans think about, purchase, and consume seafood may be at a turning point as seafood consumption has hovered around 15 to 19 pounds per person per year for the last three decades and showed signs of increasing due to pandemic-related changes in consumer behaviors. The seafood industry has a profound need to respond strategically to nascent signs of change in consumer preferences, but this is a very fragmented industry compared to other food sectors in the U.S. Early signs of success with the Seafood4Health Action Coalition<sup>1</sup> convened by Seafood Nutrition Partnership at the start of the pandemic in April 2020 to communicate the public health benefit of seafood with consumers shows that a public-private partnership is possible and this coalition has grown to more than 50 nonprofits, trade associations, government agency, philanthropy, seafood companies, retailers, and foodservice operators. The seafood industry does not have a generic seafood marketing program similar to other commodities in the USDA Agricultural

Marketing Services. Funding support is needed to help Americans understand the essential health benefits of seafood; how to access seafood affordably; how to prepare and store seafood safely; and how to eat seafood more often per the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and FDA recommendations. (Pillars 1, 2 and 3)

- **Allow Industry Partners to Share Resources for MyPlate; Use MyPlate as a Template for Other Public-Private Partnerships:** Understanding how to create healthy, nutrient-rich meals is difficult for most people, and understanding how to do so affordably, with limited availability of healthy foods in many communities, can make it even more difficult. Fortunately, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans provides a framework of knowledge on how to construct healthy diets to achieve nutrient needs across the lifespan, while doing so in a way that is respectful to “personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations”. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans comes to life in MyPlate, the nutrition education tool published by USDA’s Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP). MyPlate aims to help individuals and families with making healthy food choices. Furthermore, CNPP also provides MyPlate Kitchen, a collection of recipes and resources to support building healthy and budget-friendly meals. MyPlate Kitchen includes recipes from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) programs including CNPP and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). CNPP’s MyPlate also has a National Strategic Partners program with members from the private sector. Seafood Nutrition Partnership is an active member of CNPP’s National Strategic Partners program. This program allows CNPP and private sector members to jointly promote nutrition content and messages from the Dietary Guidelines. The seafood industry, through various organizations, have invested hugely in recipe development, nutrition research and other tools for diverse audiences that it would willingly share to aid in further building out the resources available in My Plate and associated programs. (Pillar 3)

##### **5. What are innovative, successful activities already happening at the local, state, territory, and Tribal levels that could inform actions at the Federal level?**

- **Approximately 20-30 U.S. food banks annually receive seafood donations from SeaShare.** Examples include Food Bank of Alaska, Food Lifeline in Seattle, San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, Greater Boston Food Bank, and Oregon Food Bank. SeaShare works with nutrition educators at food banks that have capacity to include seafood education as part of their services.
- **Greenville County Schools Food and Nutrition Service** staff serve 76,000 K-12 students two delicious, nutritious meals a day across 101 schools. The Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Joe Urban, has made it his mission to redefine what school food can be and he is using the school system’s size and buying power to access as much healthy, fresh food as possible - including trying to offer students seafood at least twice a week in innovative and delicious ways.<sup>xix</sup> He and his staff have initiated programs that serve breakfast in the classroom, offer Universal Free Breakfast to all students, serve fresh fruit, removed all highly processed chicken products from their menus, serve high-quality seafood, implement salad bars with scratch-made soup in all schools, and use innovative methods like food trucks to provide free meals to children in need throughout the summer.

- **The Eating Heart Healthy (EHH) program** was developed by the Seafood Nutrition Partnership (SNP) in partnership with Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Roxbury Tenants of Harvard.<sup>xx</sup> EHH teaches selection and preparation of seafood with budget-friendly recipes and its health benefits through interactive cooking and nutrition workshops. The recipe focus was FISH: Fast, Inexpensive, Sustainable, Healthy. This 4-week interactive cooking and nutrition program was designed for women ages 35-50 at risk of heart disease. This collaborative effort focused on increasing awareness of a heart healthy diet and building skills to incorporate healthy fats and nutrient dense foods into daily meals. The EHH program materials are available for free on the Seafood Nutrition Partnership website. (Pillars 1, 2, 3, 5)
- **Alaska Harvester/Processor Donation Programs:** Numerous Alaska fishing communities such as Cordova, Sitka, Kodiak, Dillingham, and others have established seafood donation programs providing wild caught Alaska fish to groups including food banks, areas requiring subsistence use, school students, and nursing home residents.<sup>xxi</sup> Though the programs vary by borough, most are partnerships with seafood members, community organizations, regional development foundations, and other local stakeholders to provide predetermined amounts of direct harvest and/or bycatch to supplement existing supplies. Programs such as could be integrated into a more widespread effort or replicated at a larger scale, and may contribute to Pillars 1 and 3.
- **The U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s 2021 listening sessions** resulted in improved messaging and resources that encourage women to proactively include seafood into their meals for their own health as well as better outcomes for their babies, especially around brain development and health. The FDA/EPA need more resources to better equip them to share the new handouts they created in 2022 on pregnancy and children - Infographic on Eating Fish for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding<sup>xxii</sup> and Infographic on Eating Fish for Children<sup>xxiii</sup>. This would be a good opportunity to seek private-public partnerships for the dissemination of materials, especially to health-care providers. (Pillars 2 and 3)
  - Eating seafood – whether canned, cooked from frozen or fresh – during pregnancy is important for both mom and baby. Seafood is the only food rich in a healthy fat called omega-3 DHA, which is needed for the baby’s brain and eye development. Seafood consumption in mothers who ate seafood during pregnancy had children with higher I.Q. by an average of 7.7 I.Q. points.<sup>xxiv</sup> In fact, moms-to-be in the United States eat on average 1.8 ounces of seafood per week compared to the dietary recommendation of 8-12 ounces of seafood per week.<sup>xxv</sup> There is also strong medical evidence showing that nutrients specific to seafood reduce the risk of dangerous, early preterm birth by over 40%. In the United States, 1 in 10 infants are born too early which impacts brain development, vision, and hearing. In 2020, the rate of preterm birth among African-American women was about 50% higher than the rate of preterm birth among white or Hispanic women.<sup>xxvi</sup>

As organizations representing those that harvest and process U.S. seafood, we believe that our suggestions will aid in your efforts to create a national strategy to address the lofty, aforementioned goals to end hunger, increase healthy eating, and reduce diet-related diseases. Seafood has a role to play and should be recognized in these efforts. Perhaps more important to note, however, is the willingness of the undersigned organizations to serve as a resource to the White House on including seafood as part of the solution to these significant, critical problems. We look forward to further discussion on incorporating seafood into this national

effort and engagement with the White House to do so as it develops a national strategy and plans for its conference this fall.

Sincerely,

Chris Barrows  
President  
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Founder and President  
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Craig Morris  
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## Sources

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<sup>i</sup> Seafood4Health Action Coalition: <http://eatseafoodamerica.com/#coalition>

<sup>ii</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP): Heart Disease and Stroke. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/heart-disease-stroke.htm#:~:text=More%20than%20877%2C500%20Americans%20die,death%20in%20the%20United%20States>. Accessed 7/8/2022.

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<sup>v</sup> World Health Organization Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. [https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/media/en/gsfs\\_general.pdf](https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/media/en/gsfs_general.pdf).

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<sup>vii</sup> Seafood Nutrition Partnership and WIChealth.org Introduce Seafood Nutrition Education Lesson for Pregnant Women and New Mothers: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/04/prweb14206920.htm>.

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