



September 9, 2021

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
Chair, Ocean Protection Council
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for Agenda Item 8b. Consideration of Authorization to Renew the California Fisheries Fund

Dear Secretary Crowfoot and Members of the Ocean Protection Council:

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust (MBFT), I am writing to express our strong support for the Ocean Protection Council's (OPC's) consideration to renew the California Fisheries Fund (CFF) and to transfer administration of the program to California FarmLink (CFL).

MBFT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit formed in 2014 with a mission to advance the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of Monterey Bay fisheries. Among our programs, we have been working to build connections between California's fishing businesses and organizations that offer loans and technical assistance. We have had a strong working relationship with Community Vision via the CFF, and for the last few years, we have worked closely with California FarmLink to strategize ways to expand loan services and technical assistance support for fishermen. We were thrilled to learn that CFL may be taking over the California Fisheries Fund, with the potential to offer smaller loans for small-scale operators.

Seafood harvesters are an essential part of California's local food systems, promoting food security by ensuring that nutritious, sustainably harvested proteins are accessible to the public. In other parts of the country – for example, Maine, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest — numerous organizations offer tailored technical assistance and loan programs for commercial fishing businesses. However, in California, fishermen do not have a strong business support network. Similarly, while many organizations are working to support agriculture and farmers, very few focus on seafood and fishermen. The support offered by the California Fisheries Fund

(831) 233-3101

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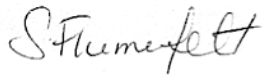
99 Pacific Street, Suite 575-C, Monterey, CA 93940

is critically needed and should be maintained. In a recent survey of 23 commercial fishermen, 87% indicated an interest in obtaining a new loan to support their small businesses.

We are very excited by the prospect of California FarmLink taking over CFF. We have collaborated with CFL on various projects over the years and have been impressed with their success in making credit available to small farmers. We are confident that they will replicate this success with the local fishing industry and stand ready to support them in whatever way we can.

Once again, we strongly support the OPC's consideration to renew the California Fisheries Fund and transfer administration of the program to California FarmLink. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "S. Flumerfelt".

Sherry Flumerfelt
Executive Director

From: dttoriumi@gmail.com <dttoriumi@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 3:50:25 PM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

To: CNRA COPC Public

Subject: Letter of support

Dear Ocean Protection Council,

My name is David Toriumi and I am the owner/operator of F/V Grinder based out of Santa Cruz. I am writing to express my support for the reauthorization of the California Fisheries Fund, and the transfer of the administration of the portfolio to California FarmLink. The California Fisheries Fund provides California small fishermen with access to flexible capital to operate their businesses, a vital resource that is otherwise largely unavailable to most small operators. California FarmLink has a demonstrated history of supporting small farmers through lending, education, and business support, all of which will be valuable additions to the California fisheries sector. California FarmLink has built relationships with fishermen like myself, and I would recommend them to fishermen seeking loans.

Thank you,
David Toriumi

Sent from my iPad

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I am writing to express my strong support for the Ocean Protection Council's (OPCs) consideration to renew the California Fisheries Fund and to transfer the program to California FarmLink (CFL).

I worked for the California Fisheries Fund for nearly 10 years: I was hired as the California Fisheries Fund's first loan officer in 2008 and I served as Fund Director from 2012-2018. The California Fisheries Fund is the sole source of financing for California's small sustainable fishing operations to acquire critically important business assets such as fishing vessels, permits, quota and gear. No other financing program offers reasonable terms and technical assistance for the state's sustainable commercial fishing industry. I witnessed firsthand how much this fund means to California's fishermen, who supply Californians with healthy, nutritious, local protein.

Over the past year, I have consulted with California FarmLink on their work to develop technical assistance tools for fishermen and for lenders who work with the fishing industry. I am thrilled that CFL has stepped up to take over the California Fisheries Fund, especially given their potential to offer smaller loans for small-scale operators—an important gap in the lending space.

Once again, I strongly support the renewal of the California Fisheries Fund and the program's transfer to California FarmLink.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phoebe R. Higgins".

Phoebe R. Higgins
Former Director, California Fisheries Fund