



NATIONAL  
Aquaculture  
ASSOCIATION

# What the Fish? ~~2023~~, ~~2024~~, 2025 Farm Bill

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Paul Zajicek and Charlie Culpepper  
2025 Wisconsin Aquaculture Conference  
Marshfield, Wisconsin





# NATIONAL Aquaculture ASSOCIATION

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## About Us

Incorporated in 1991  
13 Technical Committees  
21 Board of Directors  
Association of Associations  
Federal Advocacy and  
Industry Promotion

## Our Mission

To provide a unified national voice for U.S. aquaculture that ensures its sustainability, protects its profitability, and encourages its development in an environmentally responsible manner.

## Advocacy in Action!



43

Congressional Meetings

Speaking Engagements

31



20

Federal Agency Meetings

Public Comment Letters

41



507

Social Media Posts

News Releases

123



8

NAA Webinars



# Connected Advocacy



## PARTNERS

30+ aquaculture associations  
American Chemistry Council  
Subcommittee on Aquaculture  
U.S. Animal Health Association  
U.S. Aquaculture Society  
Animal Agriculture Alliance  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
American Fisheries Society  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

## COALITIONS

Animal Issues Coalition  
Invasive Species  
U.S. Association of Reptile Keepers  
Pet Advocacy Network  
Aquatic Drug Approval Coalition  
Agriculture Transportation Coalition





# Advocacy Tactics

## THE FARMERS PERSPECTIVE

Factual Information Source

Published and grey lit papers

Website

Media (print and social)

National, Regional, State and Species

Associations coordination

## FEDERAL AND NGOs

Federal and NGO Committees

Formal Membership/Leadership

Peanut Gallery

NAA “Walks on the Hill”

Connect as constituents

One-page fact sheets

Congressional NAA Updates



# Advocacy

## CONGRESS - 100 SENATORS AND 435 REPRESENTATIVES

### Key Senate Committees

Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
Appropriations  
Commerce, Science & Technology  
Environment and Public Works  
Health, Labor & Pensions

### Key House Committees

Agriculture  
Appropriations  
Energy and Commerce (Health Subcommittee)  
Natural Resources  
Transportation and Infrastructure



# Advocacy

## Federal Agencies and Offices within the Agencies

Agriculture : AMS, FSIS, APHIS {ARS, ERS, FSA, NASS, NIFA, RD, RMA}

Commerce : NOAA-NMFS {EDA, NCCOS}

Defense : ACOE

Health and Human Services : FDA (CFSAN, CVM)

Homeland Security : CISA, USCG

Interior : BOEM, BSEE, FWS

Transportation : FAA, FMCSA

Environmental Protection Agency: Water, Pesticides, Pollution Prevention and Toxics

White House: Subcommittee on Aquaculture, Council on Environmental Quality



## **28 Congressional Acts Regulate Aquaculture (so far)**

Agricultural Marketing Act, Animal Health Protection Act, Animal Medicinal Use Drug Clarification Act, Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act, Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, Federal Meat Inspection Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), Food Safety Modernization Act, Lacey Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Merchant Marine Act of 1936, Migratory Bird Protection Act, Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, National Marine Sanctuary Act, National Invasive Species Act, Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, Rivers and Harbors Act, Toxic Substances Control Act, Triploid Grass Carp Certification Act.



# Farm Bill 10 1

## THE DETAILS

Every 5 years, omnibus agriculture spending package covering agriculture and nutrition.

Creates USDA authorities, program and program changes and appropriation levels.

Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 is current version with \$867.2 billion in funding.



STAR TREK  
SCK

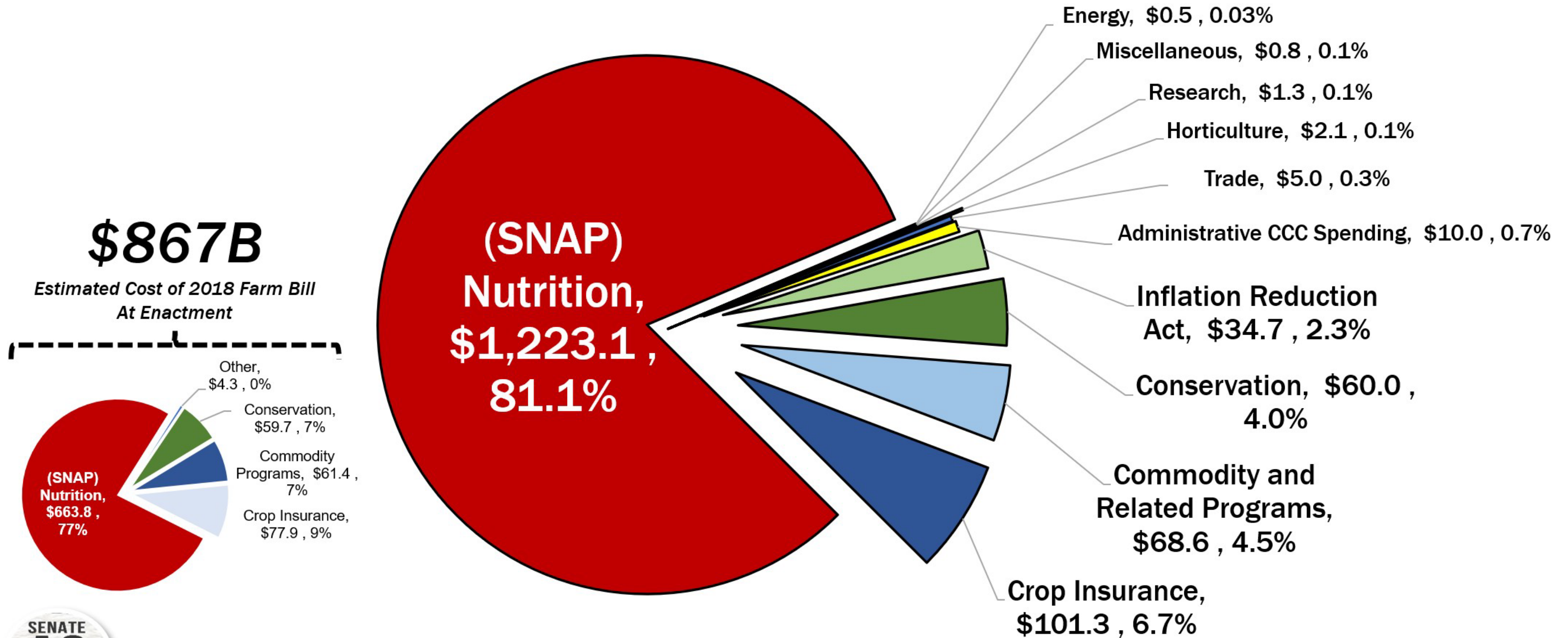


424 JALESTOWN POINT WHITE SHELLFISH  
DATE: 9/05/12 (cal/12)  
SEED SIZE: 1/2" (3182/4)  
GROUP NUMBER: 223  
SEEDLITER COUNT: 27,335  
SHELLFISH TYPE: JALESTOWN POINT WHITE SHELLFISH



# The 2023 Farm Bill Scoring Baseline\*

Billion Dollars, Fiscal Year 2024 to 2033, **Total Spending \$1.51 Trillion**



Senate Ag Committee Republicans

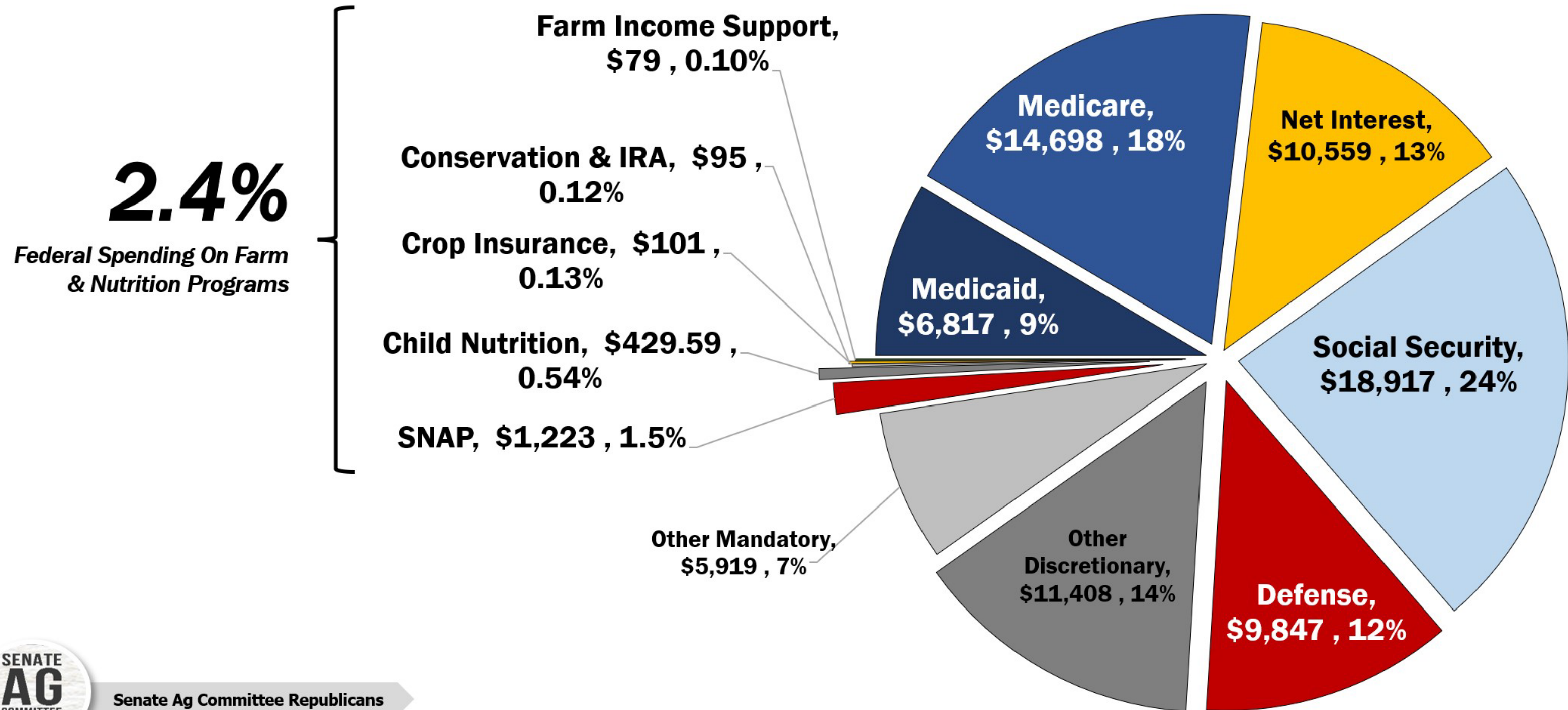
Senate Ag GOP Analysis, Congressional Budget Office May 2023 Baseline, Congressional Research Service, \*Includes Inflation Reduction Act Outlays





# U.S. Farm & Nutrition Programs, Share Of Spending

Billion Dollars, Fiscal Year 2024 to 2033, Total Mandatory and Discretionary Spending Of \$80.1 Trillion



Senate Ag Committee Republicans

Senate Ag GOP Analysis, Congressional Budget Office May 2023 Baseline





# FARM BILL ADVOCACY

## PRIORITIZATION

Developed by Legislative and Government Relations Committee and Board of Directors.

NAA visited Congress and federal agencies routinely during 2024:

- 43 Congressional meetings.
- 20 federal agency meetings.
- 41 comment letters.

13 aquaculture-related bills in Congress with substantial +/- effects.



## **USDA Working Group on Aquaculture**

Farm Bill language directing the USDA to establish a formal *Working Group on Aquaculture* reporting directly to the Secretary and including representatives from each mission area and agency, charged with facilitating the implementation of USDA programs to support freshwater and marine aquaculture of finfish, shellfish and seaweeds, serving as a "front door" to the Department and continually improving customer service to the aquaculture community.

## **Expand the Eligibility of Aquaculture within USDA Programs**

Farm Bill language directing USDA to incorporate an aquaculture definition inclusive of all commercial production of finfish, shellfish and seaweed for food and/or biofuels. This definition should be broadly applied to all appropriate USDA programs, clarifying commercial aquaculture is always eligible for USDA programs



## **Release the Proposed Aquaculture Organic Rule**

Direct the Agricultural Marketing Service to release for public comment a proposed Aquaculture Organic Rule that has been in process for 18 years.

## **Waive the AGI for Farmers**

Amend current law to waive the adjusted gross income (AGI) ceiling for farms or ranches that derive more than 75% of their income from agricultural production.

## **Expand COOL**

Amend the Agricultural Marketing Act to require country-of-origin labeling (COOL) for live, fresh, iced or processed domestic or imported farmed or wild-caught seafood wherever sold.



## Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)

Aquaculture is now included under ELAP for weather-related losses. This addition has created the first real disaster safety-net. In the Farm Bill, we request strengthening this safety net by adding:

- **Bird Depredation Coverage:** Provide a solution through ELAP to reimburse farms for piscivorous bird hazing costs and finfish and shellfish losses due to bird depredation.



## **Increase the Five Regional Aquaculture Center Authorization**

Amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101) in Title XIV of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 to increase the annual authorization for the five Regional Aquaculture Centers from \$5 million to \$15 million.

## **Authorize USDA to lease federal marine waters to farm finfish, shellfish and seaweed.**

The most crucial unaddressed aspect of offshore marine aquaculture is security of tenure: the legal right to farm at a specified location that provides sufficient property interest to support development of a viable business model, including the ability to secure insurance and adequate financing.



# Advocacy Efforts

## On -going Issues

### **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

Amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 US Code 704, with one sentence to invest USDA Wildlife Services with authority similar to that held by US Fish and Wildlife Service to issue bird depredation permits for agricultural crops, livestock and aquaculture.

### **Lacey Act**

- Amend the Lacey Act, 18 US Code 42, by recognizing the authority granted to the USDA to regulate agricultural animal health through the Animal Health Protection Act.
- Amend the definition of “fish or wildlife” in 16 USC 3371 to exclude animals that are not public resources and remain in a legal, captive state.



# Advocacy Efforts

## On -going Issues

### Endangered Species Act

- Amend to remove the authority to list foreign species.
- Amend to create a captive-bred exemption for listed species within the ESA mirroring the captive-bred exemption within the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Amend to recognize the conservation benefits provided by farmer and rancher animal husbandry experience, knowledge, applied science and services that have been and could be to a greater extent shared to assist state and federal agencies in the recovery of listed or at-risk species through public or private captive breeding directed towards population recovery.



# Advocacy Efforts

## On -going Issues

### **US Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration**

- Amend 49 USC 31502 to exempt agricultural livestock haulers from hours-of-service and electronic logging device requirements.



# NATIONAL Aquaculture ASSOCIATION

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Join the NAA!

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