

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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## A BILL

To establish a regulatory system for sustainable offshore aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American  
6 Aquaculture Act” or the “AQUAA Act”.

7 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
8 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Purposes.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.

## 2

## TITLE I—NATIONAL STANDARDS

- Sec. 101. National standards for sustainable aquaculture.
- Sec. 102. National plan to identify and designate aquaculture opportunity areas.
- Sec. 103. Aquaculture outside of an aquaculture opportunity area.

## TITLE II—CORE ACTIVITIES

- Sec. 201. Aquaculture management plans.
- Sec. 202. Offshore aquaculture permits.
- Sec. 203. Research and development grant program.
- Sec. 204. Economic soundness.

## TITLE III—REFINEMENTS

- Sec. 301. Recordkeeping, inspections, and access to information.
- Sec. 302. Marine feed standards.
- Sec. 303. Marine use rights.

## TITLE IV—ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

- Sec. 401. Office of Aquaculture.
- Sec. 402. Support for industry.
- Sec. 403. Outreach and education.
- Sec. 404. Administration.
- Sec. 405. Report and permit terms.
- Sec. 406. Federal coordination.
- Sec. 407. Prohibited acts.
- Sec. 408. Enforcement.
- Sec. 409. Authorization of appropriations.

**1 SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2 The purposes of this Act are—

3 (1) to support the development of a sustainable  
4 marine aquaculture industry in the United States  
5 and enhance access to investment capital;

6 (2) to develop sustainable marine aquaculture  
7 to complement sustainable fisheries and ecosystem-  
8 based management;

9 (3) to clarify the Federal regulatory regime for  
10 sustainable offshore aquaculture and safeguard the  
11 marine environment, wild fish stocks, and our coast-  
12 al communities;

1           (4) to support research and technology develop-  
2           ment to further these goals;

3           (5) to create new jobs, and support existing  
4           jobs within the seafood industry of the United  
5           States, including jobs for traditional fishing industry  
6           participants; and

7           (6) to reduce the United States seafood trade  
8           deficit by expanding the domestic supply of seafood  
9           through the production of sustainable offshore aqua-  
10          culture.

11 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

12          In this Act:

13           (1) **AQUACULTURE.**—The term “aqua-  
14          culture”—

15                   (A) means any activity involved in the  
16                   propagation, rearing, or attempted propagation  
17                   or rearing, of cultured species, including the  
18                   capture and rearing of broodstock;

19                   (B) does not include the practice of cap-  
20                   turing juvenile finfish to rear to maturity in an  
21                   aquaculture facility for subsequent commercial  
22                   sale; and

23                   (C) does not include the practice of rearing  
24                   and releasing cultured species for the purpose  
25                   of enhancing wild populations.

1           (2) AQUACULTURE STAKEHOLDER.—The term  
2           “aquaculture stakeholder” means owners and opera-  
3           tors of offshore aquaculture facilities, Regional Fish-  
4           ery Management Councils, interstate fisheries com-  
5           missions, conservation organizations, fisheries asso-  
6           ciations, State, county, and federally recognized In-  
7           dian Tribes, and other interested parties. The term  
8           also includes other Federal agencies that have inter-  
9           ests in aquaculture.

10           (3) COASTAL STATE.—Except as otherwise spe-  
11           cifically provided, the term “coastal State” has the  
12           meaning given the term “coastal state” in section  
13           304(4) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of  
14           1972 (16 U.S.C. 1453(4)).

15           (4) CULTURED SPECIES.—The term “cultured  
16           species” means any species propagated and reared  
17           for marine aquaculture. The term includes larval  
18           marine shellfish species that self-recruit in the off-  
19           shore environment. The term excludes any member  
20           of the class aves, reptilia, or mammalia.

21           (5) EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.—

22           (A) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise speci-  
23           fied by the President in the public interest in  
24           a writing published in the Federal Register, the  
25           term “exclusive economic zone” means a zone,

1 the outer boundary of which is 200 nautical  
2 miles from the baseline from which the breadth  
3 of the territorial sea is measured (except as es-  
4 tablished by a maritime boundary treaty in  
5 force or being provisionally applied by the  
6 United States or, in the absence of such a trea-  
7 ty, where the distance between the United  
8 States and another country is less than 400  
9 nautical miles, a line equidistant between the  
10 United States and the other country).

11 (B) INNER BOUNDARY.—Without affecting  
12 any Presidential proclamation with regard to  
13 the establishment of the United States terri-  
14 torial sea or exclusive economic zone, the inner  
15 boundary of the exclusive economic zone is—

16 (i) in the case of the coastal States, a  
17 line coterminous with the seaward bound-  
18 ary of each such State, as described in sec-  
19 tion 4 of the Submerged Lands Act (43  
20 U.S.C. 1312);

21 (ii) in the case of the Commonwealth  
22 of Puerto Rico, a line 9 nautical miles  
23 from the coastline of the Commonwealth of  
24 Puerto Rico;

1 (iii) in the case of American Samoa,  
2 the United States Virgin Islands, or Guam,  
3 a line 3 geographic miles from the coast-  
4 lines of American Samoa, the United  
5 States Virgin Islands, or Guam, respec-  
6 tively;

7 (iv) in the case of the Commonwealth  
8 of the Northern Mariana Islands—

9 (I) the coastline of the Common-  
10 wealth of the Northern Mariana Is-  
11 lands, until the Commonwealth of the  
12 Northern Mariana Islands is granted  
13 authority by the United States to reg-  
14 ulate all fishing to a line seaward of  
15 its coastline; and

16 (II) upon the United States  
17 grant of such authority, the line es-  
18 tablished by such grant of authority;  
19 or

20 (v) for any possession of the United  
21 States not under clause (ii), (iii), or (iv),  
22 the coastline of such possession.

23 (C) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this defi-  
24 nition may be construed to diminish the author-  
25 ity of the Department of Defense, the Depart-

1           ment of the Interior, or any other Federal de-  
2           partment or agency.

3           (6) HEALTHY TARGET STOCK.—The term  
4           “healthy target stock” means a component of a fish-  
5           ery managed in a similar or equivalent way to fish-  
6           eries managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery  
7           Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801  
8           et seq.) or by a United States interstate marine fish-  
9           eries commission, or a component of a fishery tar-  
10          geted for harvest that is not overfished or experi-  
11          encing overfishing.

12          (7) LESSEE.—The term “lessee” means any  
13          party to a lease, right-of-use and easement, or right-  
14          of-way, or an approved assignment thereof, issued  
15          pursuant to the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act  
16          (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

17          (8) MULTI-TROPHIC AQUACULTURE.—The term  
18          “multi-trophic aquaculture” means an assemblage of  
19          cultured species grown in close enough proximity to  
20          one another so that cultured species provide eco-  
21          system services to one another.

22          (9) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE.—The term “off-  
23          shore aquaculture” means aquaculture conducted in  
24          the exclusive economic zone.

1 (10) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE FACILITY.—The  
2 term “offshore aquaculture facility” means—

3 (A) an installation or structure used, in  
4 whole or in part, for offshore aquaculture; or

5 (B) an area of the seabed, water column,  
6 or the sediment used for offshore aquaculture.

7 (11) SECRETARY.—Except as otherwise specifi-  
8 cally provided, the term “Secretary” means the Sec-  
9 retary of Commerce, acting through the Under Sec-  
10 retary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

11 (12) SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FISHERY FOR  
12 AQUACULTURE FEED.—The term “sustainably man-  
13 aged fishery for aquaculture feed” means a fishery  
14 that is used for feed and that is managed in such  
15 a manner to maintain healthy target stocks, to pro-  
16 tect marine ecosystem structure, productivity, func-  
17 tion, and diversity, and to minimize impacts to non-  
18 target stocks.

## 19 **TITLE I—NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### 20 **SEC. 101. NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUA-** 21 **CULTURE.**

22 (a) RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.—Nothing in this  
23 Act shall be construed in derogation of applicable law, and  
24 offshore aquaculture operations shall comply with all ap-  
25 plicable statutes, rules, and regulations. In order to ensure

1 that implementing regulations for applicable statutes ap-  
2 propriately account for the unique considerations arising  
3 from offshore aquaculture, the Secretary shall comply with  
4 the following:

5 (1) With respect to regulations administered by  
6 the Department of Commerce or National Oceanic  
7 and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary shall  
8 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
9 section and update any regulations as appropriate or  
10 necessary.

11 (2) With respect to Federal regulations not ad-  
12 ministered by the Department of Commerce or Na-  
13 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the  
14 Secretary shall confer with appropriate officials to  
15 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
16 section. After such review, the Agency that admin-  
17 isters the regulations may, as appropriate or nec-  
18 essary, update such regulations.

19 (b) NATIONAL STANDARDS.—Any designation and  
20 establishment of an aquaculture opportunity area, any  
21 aquaculture management plan prepared, any regulation  
22 promulgated, and any permit granted, pursuant to this  
23 Act, shall—

1           (1) encourage development of United States off-  
2           shore aquaculture while remaining consistent with  
3           environmental requirements established by law;

4           (2) be based on the best scientific information  
5           available, taking into account traditional knowledge;

6           (3) be adaptive to offshore aquaculture develop-  
7           ment, accounting for updates in technology and  
8           changes in environmental conditions;

9           (4) prefer species that are native or historically  
10          naturalized to the region; and

11          (5) prioritize the health of cultured species.

12          (c) GUIDELINES.—The Secretary shall establish advi-  
13          sory guidelines (which shall not have the force and effect  
14          of law), based on the national standards, to assist in the  
15          development of aquaculture management plans, and regu-  
16          lations promulgated and permits granted pursuant to this  
17          title.

18          (d) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodi-  
19          cally review the advisory guidelines established under sub-  
20          section (c), as needed, but not less often than once every  
21          5 years, to determine whether changed circumstances, ad-  
22          vances in science, or improved management practices war-  
23          rant an amendment or update to the guidelines.

1 **SEC. 102. NATIONAL PLAN TO IDENTIFY AND DESIGNATE**  
2 **AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS.**

3 (a) **RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.**—Nothing in this  
4 section shall be construed in derogation of applicable law  
5 in effect on the date of enactment of this Act regulating  
6 or restricting the use of the exclusive economic zone, and  
7 the Secretary shall comply with all such applicable law  
8 when proposing, designating, and operating an aqua-  
9 culture opportunity area under this section. In order to  
10 ensure that implementing regulations for applicable stat-  
11 utes appropriately account for the unique considerations  
12 arising from offshore aquaculture, the Secretary shall  
13 comply with the following:

14 (1) With respect to regulations administered by  
15 the Department of Commerce or National Oceanic  
16 and Atmospheric Administration, the Secretary shall  
17 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
18 section and update any regulations as appropriate or  
19 necessary.

20 (2) With respect to Federal regulations not ad-  
21 ministered by the Department of Commerce or Na-  
22 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the  
23 Secretary shall confer with appropriate officials to  
24 review such regulations in accordance with this sub-  
25 section. After such review, the Agency that admin-

1       isters the regulations may, as appropriate or nec-  
2       essary, update such regulations.

3       (b) NATIONAL PLAN.—

4             (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
5       after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
6       retary shall, consistent with this section, develop a  
7       plan and timeline to systematically—

8             (A) assess the exclusive economic zone;

9             (B) prepare an inventory of sites suitable  
10       for aquaculture opportunity areas; and

11            (C) designate aquaculture opportunity  
12       areas.

13            (2) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary may des-  
14       ignate an aquaculture opportunity area prior to com-  
15       pletion of the entire inventory under paragraph  
16       (1)(B) for locations where the Secretary has com-  
17       pleted the assessment under paragraph (1)(A) and  
18       developed an aquaculture management plan as re-  
19       quired under subsection (f)(1).

20       (c) ASSESSMENT OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC  
21       ZONE; INVENTORY.—The Secretary shall conduct the as-  
22       sessment and prepare the inventory described in sub-  
23       section (b) using relevant scientific, social, and economic  
24       data, and engagement with aquaculture stakeholders and  
25       the public as provided in subsection (e). In conducting the

1 assessment, the Secretary may consider a cluster of loca-  
2 tions in close proximity with similar conditions as a single  
3 inventory item, provided that each of the locations meets  
4 the criteria established in this section. Based on the fac-  
5 tors listed in subsection (d) and the national standards  
6 in section 101, the Secretary shall make a determination  
7 based on the totality of the circumstances whether a site  
8 under consideration is suitable for sustainable offshore  
9 aquaculture. If the Secretary determines that a site is  
10 suitable, then the site shall be listed in the inventory,  
11 along with—

12 (1) a description of the site, including its co-  
13 ordinates and a map;

14 (2) a thorough evaluation of each factor de-  
15 scribed in subsection (d), and the Secretary's find-  
16 ings regarding each of those factors; and

17 (3) an analysis of how these findings justify the  
18 Secretary's determination that the site is suitable for  
19 sustainable offshore aquaculture.

20 (d) **FACTORS FOR ASSESSMENT.**—In order to con-  
21 duct the assessment in subsection (c), the Secretary shall  
22 consider the following factors:

23 (1) The oceanographic characteristics of the  
24 site.

1           (2) The bathymetry and availability of areas for  
2 anchors, moorings, and other gear.

3           (3) Current and possible future human uses of  
4 the site, and the areas in reasonable proximity to the  
5 site.

6           (4) Current and possible future conservation  
7 uses of the site, and the areas in reasonable prox-  
8 imity to the site.

9           (5) Potential impacts to wild fisheries from the  
10 escape of cultured species, or from cultured species  
11 becoming invasive or hybridizing with wild stocks  
12 within the region.

13           (6) Potential benefits from multi-trophic aqua-  
14 culture, where cultured species provide ecosystem  
15 services to one another.

16           (7) Availability of shore-side fishery infrastruc-  
17 ture and other land-based support facilities to sup-  
18 port offshore aquaculture operations.

19           (8) Expected socioeconomic impacts from oper-  
20 ations on adjacent coastal communities.

21           (9) Other factors that the Secretary determines  
22 are appropriate.

23           (e) ENGAGEMENT.—In conducting the assessment  
24 and inventory under subsection (c), the Secretary shall

1 conduct engagement with aquaculture stakeholders and  
2 the public as follows:

3 (1) PUBLIC MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS.—The  
4 Secretary shall conduct public meetings to inform in-  
5 terested aquaculture stakeholders about the intent to  
6 include a site in the inventory, share information  
7 about the process, and solicit public feedback, in-  
8 cluding written comments. In addition to public  
9 meetings, the Secretary may, consistent with the  
10 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.),  
11 convene workshops of particular aquaculture stake-  
12 holders or aquaculture stakeholder groups to provide  
13 insight, information, and comments to support the  
14 assessment and inventory process.

15 (2) CONSULTATION WITH STATES, TRIBES, AND  
16 TERRITORIES.—The Secretary shall consult with  
17 States, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and terri-  
18 tories adjacent to or within 100 miles of a site under  
19 consideration for the inventory. Such States, feder-  
20 ally recognized Indian Tribes, and territories may  
21 submit comments to the Secretary, and the Sec-  
22 retary shall consider such comments in the assess-  
23 ment and inventory process.

24 (f) DESIGNATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF AQUA-  
25 CULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREA.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—In order to designate and  
2           establish an aquaculture opportunity area, the Sec-  
3           retary shall select a site from the inventory prepared  
4           under subsection (c), and develop an aquaculture  
5           management plan under section 201. In the event  
6           that the Secretary determines the site is not viable  
7           during the development of the aquaculture manage-  
8           ment plan, the Secretary may abandon consideration  
9           of the site, and revise the inventory accordingly.

10           (2) STATE PETITION.—The Governor of any  
11           coastal State or territory, or a Tribal government in  
12           a fisheries management region under the Magnuson-  
13           Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act  
14           (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), may submit a request in  
15           writing to the Secretary to petition for locating an  
16           aquaculture opportunity area, or a group of aqua-  
17           culture opportunity areas, in reasonable proximity to  
18           the location of the requesting State, territory, or  
19           Tribal government. The Secretary shall evaluate the  
20           petition and may designate an aquaculture oppor-  
21           tunity area or group of aquaculture opportunity  
22           areas as provided in this section.

23           (3) INITIAL AND SUBSEQUENT ESTABLISHMENT  
24           OF AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS.—The Sec-  
25           retary shall initially establish at least 2 aquaculture

1 opportunity areas from the inventory developed  
2 under subsection (b) not later than 1 year after the  
3 date of enactment of this Act. Each year thereafter,  
4 the Secretary shall establish not less than 1 addi-  
5 tional aquaculture opportunity area from the inven-  
6 tory until all sites from the inventory have been con-  
7 sidered.

8 (4) ADJUSTMENT OF EXISTING AQUACULTURE  
9 OPPORTUNITY AREAS.—The Secretary may adjust  
10 the dimensions of an established aquaculture oppor-  
11 tunity area as necessary, while accounting for im-  
12 pacts to operating aquaculture facilities, the state of  
13 science, the cost-benefit ratio of the adjustment, and  
14 comments from aquaculture stakeholders and the  
15 general public.

16 (g) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—In order to test  
17 the viability of sustainable offshore aquaculture in a site  
18 listed on the inventory, the Secretary may support dem-  
19 onstration projects in an inventory site to assist in devel-  
20 oping the required contents for an aquaculture manage-  
21 ment plan. Such demonstration projects shall be carried  
22 out in a manner that is consistent with the national stand-  
23 ards in section 101. Demonstration projects may include  
24 multidisciplinary research to revive and adapt traditional

1 aquaculture systems, such as open sea ponds, to support  
2 the needs of modern communities.

3 (h) **STUDY ON AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS**  
4 **IN STATE WATERS.**—Not later than 18 months after the  
5 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct  
6 a study of the feasibility of allowing States to petition for  
7 aquaculture opportunity areas in their waters. The study  
8 shall include information and analysis on the benefits of  
9 aquaculture opportunity areas in State waters and identify  
10 barriers to implementation.

11 (i) **REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary may promulgate  
12 regulations governing the process for implementing this  
13 section.

14 (j) **SPATIAL DATA.**—To support the implementation  
15 of this section, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
16 ministration shall collect and curate spatial data relevant  
17 to aquaculture and make such data publicly available, un-  
18 less otherwise restricted by law.

19 **SEC. 103. AQUACULTURE OUTSIDE OF AN AQUACULTURE**  
20 **OPPORTUNITY AREA.**

21 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section—

22 (1) the term “site proponent” means a non-  
23 governmental entity that assesses a site and develops  
24 an aquaculture management plan for that site in ac-  
25 cordance with subsection (c); and

1           (2) the term “notice of intent” means a written  
2 document that communicates the site proponent’s in-  
3 tention to develop an offshore aquaculture site, and  
4 includes the location, type of aquaculture, cultured  
5 species, and other information the Secretary re-  
6 quires.

7           (b) AQUACULTURE OUTSIDE OF AN AQUACULTURE  
8 OPPORTUNITY AREA.—Offshore aquaculture may be con-  
9 ducted outside of an aquaculture opportunity area only as  
10 provided in this section.

11           (c) PROCESS AND REGULATIONS.—

12           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop  
13 a process and promulgate regulations, consistent  
14 with this section, to allow a site proponent to, at its  
15 own expense—

16                   (A) assess sites smaller than an aqua-  
17 culture opportunity area for offshore aqua-  
18 culture in an exclusive economic zone;

19                   (B) develop aquaculture management plans  
20 for those sites;

21                   (C) submit a notice of intent and applica-  
22 tion to the Secretary requesting approval to  
23 conduct aquaculture at the site; and

24                   (D) apply for a permit under section 202.

1           (2) PROCESS.—The process developed by the  
2 Secretary shall include—

3           (A) the process for submitting a notice of  
4 intent, publishing the notice of intent, and solie-  
5 iting comments under subsection (d);

6           (B) the form of application to be used by  
7 the site proponent;

8           (C) the required contents of the applica-  
9 tion, including an analysis of the factors in sec-  
10 tion 102(d) and the items in section 201(c);

11           (D) a process for submitting the comments  
12 received under subsection (d), along with the  
13 disposition of each; and

14           (E) a timeline for the Secretary’s consider-  
15 ation and action on the application, which may  
16 be either to approve, deny, or request more in-  
17 formation.

18 (d) NOTICE OF INTENT.—

19           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require  
20 each site proponent that is assessing a site under  
21 subsection (c)(1) to submit a notice of intent before  
22 developing an aquaculture management plan or sub-  
23 mitting an application under this section. The Sec-  
24 retary, acting through the National Oceanic and At-  
25 mospheric Administration, shall—

1 (A) publish the notice of intent, together  
2 with information on the process under sub-  
3 section (c)(2);

4 (B) deliver the notice of intent, together  
5 with information on the process under sub-  
6 section (c)(2), to—

7 (i) States and federally recognized In-  
8 dian Tribes within 100 miles of the pro-  
9 posed site; and

10 (ii) any local governments within 10  
11 miles of the proposed site;

12 (C) convene meetings with aquaculture  
13 stakeholders and the public—

14 (i) to solicit public comment, including  
15 written comments, to be shared with the  
16 site proponent; and

17 (ii) including, at a minimum—

18 (I) at least 1 public meeting for  
19 aquaculture stakeholders; and

20 (II) meetings with State, local,  
21 and Tribal government representa-  
22 tives; and

23 (D) consult with interested Federal agen-  
24 cies.

1           (2) COMMENTS.—States, federally recognized  
2           Indian Tribes, and local governments described in  
3           paragraph (1)(B) may submit comments on the no-  
4           tice of intent to the Secretary, which shall be shared  
5           with the site proponent.

6           (e) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Each site proponent shall  
7           include all comments received under subsection (d) in the  
8           aquaculture management plan, along with a disposition of  
9           each.

## 10           **TITLE II—CORE ACTIVITIES**

### 11           **SEC. 201. AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT PLANS.**

12           (a) DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION.—In order to im-  
13           plement this Act, the Secretary shall develop and adopt  
14           for aquaculture opportunity areas established under sec-  
15           tion 102, or locations where multiple aquaculture oppor-  
16           tunity areas may be suitable for establishment—

17                   (1) an aquaculture management plan; and

18                   (2) amendments to each such plan that are nec-  
19           essary from time to time.

20           (b) OVERLAPPING MANAGEMENT AREAS.—The Sec-  
21           retary may use a single aquaculture management plan for  
22           multiple aquaculture opportunity areas where such areas  
23           are within reasonable proximity to each other and suffi-  
24           ciently similar.

1 (c) ENGAGEMENT.—Prior to developing, adopting, or  
2 amending an aquaculture management plan under this  
3 section, the Secretary, acting through the National Oce-  
4 anic and Atmospheric Administration, shall meet with  
5 aquaculture stakeholders and the public to solicit their  
6 comments, and consult with interested Federal agencies.  
7 Such comments shall be duly reported in an addendum  
8 to the aquaculture management plan, along with a dispo-  
9 sition of each. At a minimum, meetings under this sub-  
10 section shall include—

11 (1) at least one public meeting for aquaculture  
12 stakeholders; and

13 (2) meetings with State, local, and Tribal gov-  
14 ernment representatives.

15 (d) REQUIRED CONTENTS.—An aquaculture manage-  
16 ment plan that is prepared by the Secretary under this  
17 title shall—

18 (1) include information and analysis that the  
19 Secretary determines is appropriate to establish  
20 common reference points for conducting aquaculture  
21 in the aquaculture opportunity area;

22 (2) specify parameters and guidance for con-  
23 ducting aquaculture in the aquaculture opportunity  
24 area, based on the information and analysis under  
25 paragraph (1), including—

1 (A) the geographic boundaries of the aqua-  
2 culture opportunity area;

3 (B) the number of sites that each aqua-  
4 culture opportunity area will support;

5 (C) the species allowed for aquaculture in  
6 the aquaculture opportunity area;

7 (D) standards for the structural integrity  
8 of aquaculture facilities to prevent the escape of  
9 cultured species; and

10 (E) contingency plans that will be re-  
11 quired, along with standards for such plans, for  
12 events including—

13 (i) severe weather;

14 (ii) escape of cultured species;

15 (iii) situations affecting, or compro-  
16 mising, the health of cultured species; and

17 (iv) other contingencies the Secretary  
18 identifies;

19 (3) describe how the Secretary will monitor as-  
20 pects of aquaculture in the aquaculture opportunity  
21 area in order to support compliance with this Act,  
22 including—

23 (A) escape of cultured species;

24 (B) situations affecting, or compromising,  
25 the health of cultured species;

1 (C) the economic and commercial produc-  
2 tivity of the aquaculture opportunity area; and

3 (D) other matters the Secretary identifies;  
4 and

5 (4) prescribe such other measures, require-  
6 ments, or conditions and restrictions as are deter-  
7 mined to be necessary and appropriate for imple-  
8 mentation of this Act.

9 (e) IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.—The Secretary  
10 shall develop and adopt regulations determined to be nec-  
11 essary and appropriate to implement an aquaculture man-  
12 agement plan or plan amendment developed under this  
13 section.

14 (f) PERIODIC REVIEW.—The Secretary shall periodi-  
15 cally review plans developed under subsection (a) as need-  
16 ed, but not less often than once every 5 years, to deter-  
17 mine whether changed circumstances, advances in science,  
18 or improved management practices warrant an amend-  
19 ment or update to the plan.

20 **SEC. 202. OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PERMITS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—After the Secretary promulgates  
22 final regulations under section 404(a), the Secretary may  
23 issue an offshore aquaculture permit if the Secretary de-  
24 termines that—

1           (1) the proposed offshore aquaculture facility,  
2           type of aquaculture operation, and cultured species  
3           are consistent with the purposes in section 2 and the  
4           national standards for sustainable offshore aqua-  
5           culture in section 101;

6           (2) the proposed offshore aquaculture facility,  
7           type of aquaculture operation, and cultured species  
8           are consistent with an established aquaculture man-  
9           agement plan, or the permit applicant has provided  
10          the Secretary with sufficient information and anal-  
11          ysis, such as would be included in an established  
12          aquaculture management plan, to merit issuance, if  
13          the permit is intended to be located outside of an  
14          aquaculture opportunity area;

15          (3) the applicant is able to comply with this Act  
16          and any terms and conditions prescribed under sec-  
17          tion 404(a), is financially responsible, and will oper-  
18          ate the offshore aquaculture facility using the best  
19          practicable technology and maintain it in good work-  
20          ing order; and

21          (4) issuance of the offshore aquaculture permit  
22          is not prohibited under section 407.

23          (b) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**—An offshore aqua-  
24          culture permit holder shall be authorized to conduct off-  
25          shore aquaculture consistent with—

1           (1) this Act, including regulations promulgated  
2           to carry out this Act;

3           (2) other applicable provisions of law, including  
4           regulations; and

5           (3) any terms or conditions imposed by the Na-  
6           tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

7           (c) PERMIT PROCEDURE.—

8           (1) APPLICATION.—An applicant for an off-  
9           shore aquaculture permit shall submit an application  
10          to the Secretary. The application shall specify—

11                (A) the proposed location of the offshore  
12                aquaculture facility and the location of on-shore  
13                facilities used for propagation or rearing of cul-  
14                tured species, such as hatcheries or research op-  
15                erations;

16                (B) the type of aquaculture operations that  
17                will be conducted at all facilities described in  
18                subparagraph (A);

19                (C) the cultured species, or a specified  
20                range of species, to be propagated or reared, or  
21                both, at the offshore aquaculture facility;

22                (D) the source of eggs, larvae, or juvenile  
23                cultured species that will be used in aquaculture  
24                operations, an analysis of the likely impacts on  
25                wild populations and habitats, such as preven-

1           tion of the spread of pathogens, and the infor-  
2           mation upon which the assessment was made;

3                   (E) plans to respond to—

4                           (i) a natural disaster;

5                           (ii) an escapement;

6                           (iii) disease; and

7                           (iv) other circumstances designate by  
8           the Secretary; and

9                   (F) such other design, construction, and  
10           operational information as the Secretary may  
11           require to ensure the integrity of the applicant's  
12           operations and contingency planning.

13           (2) NOTICE.—Whenever the National Oceanic  
14           and Atmospheric Administration receives an offshore  
15           aquaculture permit application, the Secretary shall—

16                   (A) provide notice and a copy of the appli-  
17           cation to the Governor of every State or terri-  
18           tory adjacent to or within 100 miles of the pro-  
19           posed site and to the federally recognized In-  
20           dian Tribes within those States; and

21                   (B) provide public notice and an oppor-  
22           tunity for public comment for a period of not  
23           less than 60 days for each offshore aquaculture  
24           permit application.

1           (3) COMMENTS AND CONSULTATION.—The Sec-  
2           retary shall take any comments submitted by Gov-  
3           ernors and the public into consideration, and shall  
4           consult with interested aquaculture stakeholders as  
5           warranted before making a final decision on the dis-  
6           position of an offshore aquaculture permit applica-  
7           tion.

8           (4) DEADLINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPLI-  
9           CATIONS FOR PERMITS.—Not later than 30 days  
10          after the date on which the Secretary receives an  
11          offshore aquaculture permit application, the Sec-  
12          retary shall—

13                 (A) notify the applicant that the applica-  
14                 tion is complete; or

15                 (B) notify the applicant that information is  
16                 missing and specify any information that is re-  
17                 quired to be submitted for the application to be  
18                 complete.

19          (5) ISSUANCE OR DEFERRAL.—Not later than  
20          90 days after the period for public comments on a  
21          completed application has concluded, the Secretary  
22          shall—

23                 (A) issue the permit, if the application  
24                 complies with the provisions of this Act, includ-  
25                 ing the national standards for sustainable off-

1 shore aquaculture in section 101, requirements  
2 under the National Environmental Policy Act of  
3 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and other appli-  
4 cable law;

5 (B) defer the decision on the permit, if the  
6 Secretary determines that the application can  
7 be improved to meet the requirements of para-  
8 graph (1), and provide to the applicant a notice  
9 that specifies any steps that the applicant could  
10 take for the permit to be issued; or

11 (C) deny the permit, providing a justifica-  
12 tion for the Secretary's determination that the  
13 application does not meet the requirements of  
14 paragraph (1), or any other applicable law, and  
15 that these issues cannot be remediated.

16 (6) EXTENSION OF REVIEW.—The Secretary  
17 may extend the review period for an additional 90  
18 days if the Secretary determines that further time is  
19 needed to analyze the application. The Secretary  
20 may further extend the review period beyond the ex-  
21 tension provided in the preceding sentence if the  
22 Secretary determines that the Department of Com-  
23 merce needs more time to comply with applicable  
24 Federal law, provided that the Secretary's deter-  
25 mination states the specific actions the Department

1 must undertake, together with deadlines for com-  
2 pleting such actions.

3 (d) PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—An offshore aquaculture per-  
5 mit holder shall be—

6 (A) a citizen or permanent resident of the  
7 United States; or

8 (B) a corporation, partnership, or other  
9 entity that—

10 (i) is organized and existing under the  
11 laws of the United States or a U.S. State;  
12 and

13 (ii) is not owned by a foreign nation  
14 or majority-controlled by a foreign nation.

15 (2) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—Subject to sub-  
16 section (n), the Secretary shall—

17 (A) prescribe the terms and conditions that  
18 apply to each offshore aquaculture permit to  
19 achieve the national standards for sustainable  
20 offshore aquaculture in section 101, and an ap-  
21 plicable aquaculture management plan and im-  
22 plementing regulations developed under section  
23 201; and

1 (B) specify in each offshore aquaculture  
2 permit the duration, size, and location of the  
3 offshore aquaculture facility.

4 (3) STATUTES AND REGULATIONS.—Offshore  
5 aquaculture permits are subject to this Act, regula-  
6 tions promulgated pursuant thereto, and other stat-  
7 utes and regulations in existence upon the effective  
8 date of the permit. When promulgating regulations,  
9 the Secretary shall indicate whether and to what ex-  
10 tent the regulations apply to existing offshore aqua-  
11 culture permits.

12 (e) DURATION.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
14 graph (2), an offshore aquaculture permit shall have  
15 an initial 15-year duration, and may be renewed  
16 subject to the terms of this Act.

17 (2) EXCEPTIONS.—

18 (A) AQUACULTURE OPPORTUNITY  
19 AREAS.—A permit issued for offshore aqua-  
20 culture to be conducted in an aquaculture op-  
21 portunity area as provided in section 102 shall  
22 have an initial 25-year duration.

23 (B) OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF.—The  
24 Secretary shall develop the duration of an off-  
25 shore aquaculture permit subject to subsection

1           (o)(1), in consultation with the Secretary of the  
2           Interior, except that the permit shall expire not  
3           later than the date that the lessee or the les-  
4           see's operator submits, to the Secretary of the  
5           Interior, a final application for the decommis-  
6           sioning and removal of an existing facility upon  
7           which an offshore aquaculture facility is lo-  
8           cated.

9           (f) TRANSFER.—A permit may be transferred as pro-  
10          vided under this subsection, provided that the permit is  
11          still valid, and has not been amended due to emergency  
12          circumstances. To propose a transfer, a permittee shall  
13          submit an application to the Secretary, and the Secretary  
14          shall review and make a determination of whether to ap-  
15          prove, deny, or request additional information not later  
16          than 60 days after the date of receipt of the application.  
17          The application shall include—

18               (1) notice to the Secretary of the intention to  
19          transfer;

20               (2) the reason for the transfer;

21               (3) the identity of the transferee, and whether  
22          the transferee holds, has held, or is applying for a  
23          permit under this Act;

24               (4) the transferee's assumption of responsi-  
25          bility, coverage, and liability for activities performed

1 under the permit, as of the effective date of the  
2 transfer; and

3 (5) any additional information requested by the  
4 Secretary.

5 (g) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may renew an off-  
6 shore aquaculture permit that has not been revoked for  
7 an additional 15-year period, as provided in subsection (e),  
8 before the end of the original permit's duration, if—

9 (1) the permit or amended permit complies with  
10 existing requirements;

11 (2) the permit holder has not been subject to  
12 sanctions under section 408 or committed a prohib-  
13 ited act under such section;

14 (3) the permit has not been modified because of  
15 emergency considerations; and

16 (4) notice under subsection (c)(2) has been  
17 given.

18 (h) REVOCATION.—The Secretary may, pursuant to  
19 regulations issued under this Act, revoke an offshore  
20 aquaculture permit, if—

21 (1) the permit holder commits a prohibited act  
22 under section 407;

23 (2) the permit holder fails to begin offshore  
24 aquaculture operations within 2 years from the date  
25 the required Federal permits are obtained; or

1           (3) there is an interruption of offshore aqua-  
2           culture operations of at least 2 years in duration  
3           that is unrelated to best management practices.

4           (i) EXPIRATION OR REVOCATION.—Not later than 1  
5           year after the expiration or revocation of an offshore aqua-  
6           culture permit, a permit holder shall—

7           (1) remove all structures, gear, and other prop-  
8           erty from the offshore aquaculture facility site; and

9           (2) take such other measures to restore the site,  
10          as the Secretary considers necessary.

11          (j) EMERGENCY DETERMINATION.—If the Secretary  
12          determines that an emergency exists that poses a signifi-  
13          cant risk to the safety of humans, to the marine environ-  
14          ment, to cultured species, or to the security of the United  
15          States and that requires suspension, modification, or rev-  
16          ocation of an offshore aquaculture permit, the Secretary  
17          may suspend, modify, or revoke the permit for such time  
18          as the Secretary determines is necessary to address the  
19          emergency. The Secretary shall afford the permit holder  
20          a prompt post-suspension, post-modification, or post-rev-  
21          ocation opportunity to be heard regarding the suspension,  
22          modification, or revocation.

23          (k) FEES.—

24          (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

1           (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may es-  
2           tablish, by regulation, application fees and an-  
3           nual offshore aquaculture permit fees under  
4           this section.

5           (B) DEPOSIT AND COLLECTION.—The fees  
6           described in subparagraph (A) shall be depos-  
7           ited as offsetting collections in the operations,  
8           research, and facilities account of the National  
9           Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Fees  
10          may be collected and made available to the ex-  
11          tent provided in advance in appropriation Acts.

12          (C) SETTING OF FEES.—The fees de-  
13          scribed in subparagraph (A) shall be set as an  
14          amount such that the total revenue from such  
15          fees does not exceed the amount required to  
16          cover the costs of management, data collection,  
17          analysis, annual inspection, and enforcement  
18          activities related to permits under this section.

19          (2) WAIVERS.—The Secretary may waive, in  
20          whole or in part, any fee under this section if an off-  
21          shore aquaculture facility is used primarily for re-  
22          search.

23          (3) GUARANTEES.—The Secretary shall require  
24          a permit holder to post a bond or other form of fi-  
25          nancial guarantee in an amount determined by the

1 Secretary, to be reasonable and commensurate with  
2 the offshore aquaculture operation and as sufficient  
3 to cover, without duplication—

4 (A) any unpaid fees;

5 (B) the cost of removing an offshore aqua-  
6 culture facility at the expiration or revocation of  
7 an offshore aquaculture permit; or

8 (C) the cost of site remediation for impacts  
9 arising from authorized activities.

10 (l) MAGNUSON-STEVEN'S FISHERY CONSERVATION  
11 AND MANAGEMENT ACT.—Beginning on the effective date  
12 of the final regulations promulgated under section 404,  
13 the conduct of offshore aquaculture that is in accordance  
14 with an offshore aquaculture permit issued under this sec-  
15 tion shall not be considered fishing for purposes of the  
16 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Manage-  
17 ment Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), but shall be considered  
18 a fishery under section 3 of the Marine Mammal Protec-  
19 tion Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362).

20 (m) COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER USES.—Each  
21 Federal agency implementing this section, person subject  
22 to this section, and coastal State seeking to review a per-  
23 mit application under this section shall comply with the  
24 applicable provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act

1 of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.), including regulations  
2 promulgated to carry out such Act.

3 (n) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—An offshore aqua-  
4 culture permit issued under this section shall not super-  
5 sede or substitute for any other authorization required  
6 under Federal or State laws.

7 (o) ACTIONS AFFECTING THE OUTER CONTINENTAL  
8 SHELF.—

9 (1) NOTIFICATION OF SECRETARY OF THE IN-  
10 TERIOR.—The Secretary shall notify the Secretary  
11 of the Interior for each application for an offshore  
12 aquaculture permit that is located on the outer con-  
13 tinental shelf.

14 (2) PRIOR CONSENT REQUIRED.—An offshore  
15 aquaculture facility may not be located on a lease,  
16 right-of-use and easement, or right-of-way author-  
17 ized or permitted under the Outer Continental Shelf  
18 Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.) without the  
19 prior consent of any lessee and other owner of oper-  
20 ating interest.

21 (3) COMPLIANCE REVIEW.—The Secretary of  
22 the Interior shall review each agreement between a  
23 prospective offshore aquaculture operator and a les-  
24 see. The Secretary of the Interior shall approve such  
25 agreement if it is consistent with the Federal lease

1 terms, the Department of the Interior regulations,  
2 and the Secretary of the Interior's role in the protec-  
3 tion of the marine environment, property, and  
4 human life or health. An agreement under this sub-  
5 section shall—

6 (A) be part of the information reviewed  
7 under paragraph (4); and

8 (B) not be subject to a separate Coastal  
9 Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C.  
10 1451 et seq.) review.

11 (4) COORDINATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGE-  
12 MENT ACT REVIEW.—

13 (A) STATE REVIEW.—

14 (i) IN GENERAL.—A coastal State's  
15 review under the Coastal Zone Manage-  
16 ment Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.)  
17 shall include any modification or change to  
18 a lessee's approved plan that results from,  
19 or is necessary for, the issuance of an off-  
20 shore aquaculture permit if the State si-  
21 multaneously receives—

22 (I) the information related to the  
23 modification or change; and

1 (II) the offshore aquaculture per-  
2 mit applicant's consistency certifi-  
3 cation.

4 (ii) SIMULTANEOUS RECEIPT.—If the  
5 coastal State simultaneously receives the  
6 information related to a modification or  
7 change to a lessee's approved plan and the  
8 offshore aquaculture permit applicant's  
9 consistency certification, then—

10 (I) a lessee shall not be required  
11 to submit a separate consistency cer-  
12 tification for the modification or  
13 change under section 307(c)(3)(B) of  
14 the Coastal Zone Management Act of  
15 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1456(c)(3)(B)); and

16 (II) the coastal State's concur-  
17 rence (or presumed concurrence) or  
18 objection to the consistency certifi-  
19 cation for the offshore aquaculture  
20 permit under section 307(c)(3)(A) of  
21 such Act shall apply both—

22 (aa) to the offshore aqua-  
23 culture permit; and

24 (bb) to any related modifica-  
25 tion or change to a lessee's plan

1 approved under the Outer Conti-  
2 nental Shelf Lands Act (43  
3 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

4 (B) STATE REVIEW UNDER SECTION  
5 307(C)(3)(B) OF THE COASTAL ZONE MANAGE-  
6 MENT ACT OF 1972.—To the extent that a  
7 coastal State is not authorized by section  
8 307(c)(3)(A) of the Coastal Zone Management  
9 Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1456(c)(3)(A)) to re-  
10 view an offshore aquaculture permit application  
11 submitted under this Act, then a modification  
12 or change to a lessee’s approved plan shall be  
13 subject to coastal State review under section  
14 307(c)(3)(B) of such Act if a consistency cer-  
15 tification for the modification or change is re-  
16 quired under applicable Federal regulations.

17 (C) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

18 (i) LESSEE’S APPROVED PLAN.—The  
19 term “lessee’s approved plan” includes a  
20 document for which a consistency certifi-  
21 cation is required under applicable Federal  
22 regulations, such as a change to the ap-  
23 proved plan for decommissioning a facility.

24 (ii) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PERMIT  
25 APPLICANT.—The term “offshore aqua-

1 culture permit applicant” means an appli-  
2 cant for an offshore aquaculture permit  
3 under this section that—

4 (I) will locate the proposed facil-  
5 ity in an area that would require con-  
6 sent from the lessee as described in  
7 paragraph (2); and

8 (II) is required to submit a con-  
9 sistency certification for its offshore  
10 aquaculture application under section  
11 307(c)(3)(A) of the Coastal Zone  
12 Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C.  
13 1456(c)(3)(A)) to the coastal State.

14 (iii) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE PER-  
15 MIT APPLICATION.—The term “offshore  
16 aquaculture permit application” means an  
17 application for an offshore aquaculture  
18 permit under this section that will locate  
19 the proposed facility in an area that would  
20 require consent from the lessee as de-  
21 scribed in paragraph (2).

22 (5) JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY.—For off-  
23 shore aquaculture located on a facility described  
24 under this subsection, a permit holder and each  
25 party that is or was a lessee of the lease on which

1 the facility is located during the term of the offshore  
2 aquaculture permit shall be jointly and severally lia-  
3 ble for the removal of any construction or modifica-  
4 tion related to the offshore aquaculture operations if  
5 a bond or other form of financial guarantee under  
6 subsection (j)(3) for aquaculture operations is insuf-  
7 ficient to cover those obligations. This paragraph  
8 shall not affect any obligation to decommission the  
9 facility under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act  
10 (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

11 (6) ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the  
13 Interior may, to carry out this subsection—

14 (i) promulgate rules and regulations  
15 as necessary and appropriate;

16 (ii) require and enforce any additional  
17 terms or conditions that the Secretary of  
18 the Interior considers necessary to ensure  
19 the compatibility of aquaculture operations  
20 with activities for which permits, author-  
21 izations, leases, negotiated agreements,  
22 right-of-way, or right-of-use and easement  
23 were issued under the Outer Continental  
24 Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.);

1 (iii) issue an order to an offshore  
2 aquaculture permit holder to take any ac-  
3 tion the Secretary of the Interior considers  
4 necessary to ensure safe operations on the  
5 facility, and to protect the marine environ-  
6 ment, property, or human life or health;

7 (iv) require and enforce any additional  
8 terms or conditions that the Secretary of  
9 the Interior considers necessary—

10 (I) to protect the marine environ-  
11 ment, property, or human life or  
12 health; and

13 (II) to ensure the compatibility of  
14 aquaculture operations with activities  
15 for which permits were issued under  
16 the Outer Continental Shelf Lands  
17 Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.); and

18 (v) enforce all requirements contained  
19 in the regulations, lease terms and condi-  
20 tions, and orders under the Outer Conti-  
21 nental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et  
22 seq.).

23 (B) INTERPRETATION.—Failure to comply  
24 with any order issued under subparagraph  
25 (A)(iii) shall constitute a violation of the Outer

1 Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331  
2 et seq.).

3 (p) ASSURANCE OF ANIMAL HEALTH.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section shall  
5 affect the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture  
6 to—

7 (A) carry out the Animal Health Protec-  
8 tion Act (7 U.S.C. 8301 et seq.) with respect to  
9 cultured species in the exclusive economic zone;  
10 or

11 (B) operate as the lead Federal agency for  
12 providing animal health oversight for cultured  
13 species in the exclusive economic zone, including  
14 animal health and disease risk assessments.

15 (2) CONTINGENCY PLANS.—As part of an appli-  
16 cation for a permit for offshore aquaculture or as  
17 part of an aquaculture management plan established  
18 in section 201, the Secretary of Agriculture may ap-  
19 prove contingency plans, along with standards for  
20 such plans, for events relating to situations affecting  
21 the health of cultured species.

22 (3) CRITERIA FOR PRACTICING VETERINARY  
23 MEDICINE IN WATERS OUTSIDE STATE JURISDIC-  
24 TION.—A veterinarian may practice veterinary medi-

1        cine in waters outside State jurisdiction if the veteri-  
2        narian—

3                (A) is licensed and in good standing to  
4                practice veterinary medicine in any State;

5                (B) holds a category II veterinary accredi-  
6                tation from the Animal and Plant Health In-  
7                spection Service; and

8                (C) has a valid veterinarian client-patient  
9                relationship with the facility in which the indi-  
10                vidual is practicing veterinary medicine.

11        (q) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this Act shall su-  
12        persepe permit applications in process on the date of en-  
13        actment of this Act or permits that are in place on the  
14        date of enactment of this Act.

15        **SEC. 203. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PRO-**  
16                **GRAM.**

17        (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish, in  
18        consultation with applicable Federal agencies, coastal  
19        States, federally recognized Indian Tribes, Regional Fish-  
20        ery Management Councils, academic institutions, and in-  
21        terested aquaculture stakeholders, a research and develop-  
22        ment grant program to further the purposes of this Act.  
23        In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall con-  
24        sider using existing programs that leverage State and local  
25        partnerships and take advantage of the extramural re-

1 search community, including the National Sea Grant Col-  
2 lege Program under the National Sea Grant College Pro-  
3 gram Act (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.).

4 (b) COMPONENTS.—The research and development  
5 grant program described in subsection (a) shall include re-  
6 search conducted internally by the National Oceanic and  
7 Atmospheric Administration, and through the award of  
8 competitive, peer-reviewed grants to fund research and ex-  
9 tension services—

10 (1) to create innovative design and engineering  
11 solutions to common obstacles within the offshore  
12 aquaculture industry;

13 (2) to enable the transition of innovative aqua-  
14 culture technologies, including technologies focused  
15 on the commercialization of high-value marine spe-  
16 cies, from controlled studies to commercial use;

17 (3) to evaluate the role of genetics in relation  
18 to the development of improved lines of brood stock,  
19 disease resistance, and interactions between cultured  
20 species and wild stocks;

21 (4) to advance research into the management,  
22 mitigation, and prevention of cultured species dis-  
23 eases;

24 (5) to develop cost-effective feeds to optimize  
25 the sustainable use of protein and lipid sources origi-

1 nating from wild fish, plants, and other sources,  
2 maximize growth and production performance of cul-  
3 tured species, prevent the spread of pathogens and  
4 parasites, and maintain the human health benefits of  
5 cultured seafood;

6 (6) to improve techniques for monitoring, as-  
7 sessing, and addressing environmental impacts of  
8 offshore aquaculture and develop and evaluate meth-  
9 odologies to prevent, minimize, and mitigate poten-  
10 tial adverse environmental impacts;

11 (7) to evaluate the potential for offshore aqua-  
12 culture to serve as a tool for environmental manage-  
13 ment, including connections to water quality, water-  
14 shed management, and fishery conservation and  
15 management;

16 (8) to evaluate the potential impact of offshore  
17 aquaculture on the economies of coastal commu-  
18 nities, particularly those dependent on traditional  
19 fishery resources;

20 (9) to identify barriers to entry in the offshore  
21 aquaculture industry and propose solutions to over-  
22 come them;

23 (10) to study the traditional aquaculture meth-  
24 ods and practices of Native Americans, Alaska Na-

1       tives, and Native Hawaiians to evaluate economic,  
2       environmental, and sociological impacts;

3               (11) to investigate other priority issues identi-  
4       fied by the Secretary; and

5               (12) to evaluate economic aspects of offshore  
6       aquaculture, including production costs and market  
7       development.

8       (c) COORDINATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL PRO-  
9       GRAMS.—The Secretary shall—

10              (1) coordinate aquaculture research and devel-  
11       opment intramural programs and grants within the  
12       Department of Commerce and with other Federal in-  
13       tramural and extramural programs that provide  
14       grant funding for purposes similar to those under  
15       subsection (b), such as grants administered by the  
16       National Sea Grant College Program and the Na-  
17       tional Institute of Standards and Technology; and

18              (2) coordinate the research and development  
19       grant program established in this section with the  
20       interagency aquaculture coordinating group estab-  
21       lished under section 6 of the National Aquaculture  
22       Act of 1980 (16 U.S.C. 2805) and with the research  
23       and development conducted through the Cooperative  
24       Extension System of the Department of Agriculture.

1 (d) COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AGREEMENT.—To  
2 carry out this section, the Secretary may enter into a coop-  
3 erative agreement with a State, institution of higher edu-  
4 cation, or other private institution or research center.

5 **SEC. 204. ECONOMIC SOUNDNESS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 53708 of title 46, United  
7 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
8 lowing:

9 “(f) AQUACULTURE.—In making the findings under  
10 subsections (a) and (b), the Administrator and the Sec-  
11 retary may take into account factors such as—

12 “(1) the transferability of an aquaculture per-  
13 mit;

14 “(2) an assessment of the shore-side seafood  
15 economy where the borrower will be operating; and

16 “(3) the existence of a formal technical assist-  
17 ance program administered by a governmental agen-  
18 cy.”.

19 **TITLE III—REFINEMENTS**

20 **SEC. 301. RECORDKEEPING, INSPECTIONS, AND ACCESS TO**  
21 **INFORMATION.**

22 (a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary, after consulta-  
23 tion with other interested Federal departments and agen-  
24 cies, shall prescribe by regulation—

1           (1) the records that an offshore aquaculture  
2 permit holder is required to establish and maintain;

3           (2) the reports that an offshore aquaculture  
4 permit holder is required to make;

5           (3) the information that an offshore aqua-  
6 culture permit holder is required to provide, which  
7 shall at a minimum include—

8                   (A) data regarding escape events;

9                   (B) the prevalence of disease in the off-  
10 shore aquaculture facility, including a descrip-  
11 tion of veterinary services provided for treat-  
12 ment;

13                   (C) a copy of any required incident or an-  
14 nual report required under a permit necessary  
15 for aquaculture operations under other Federal  
16 law; and

17                   (D) other information, as the Secretary  
18 may require; and

19           (4) any other recordkeeping that an offshore  
20 aquaculture permit holder is required to satisfy, as  
21 necessary to carry out this Act.

22           (b) REGULATORY CONSISTENCY.—The regulations  
23 under subsection (a) may not amend, contradict, or dupli-  
24 cate regulations under any other Federal law.

1 (c) RECORDKEEPING.—An offshore aquaculture per-  
2 mit holder shall—

3 (1) comply with the recordkeeping regulations  
4 under subsection (a); and

5 (2) submit such reports, and make such records  
6 and information available as the Secretary may re-  
7 quest.

8 (d) INSPECTIONS.—

9 (1) FREQUENCY.—The Secretary shall conduct  
10 an annual inspection of offshore aquaculture facili-  
11 ties.

12 (2) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide rea-  
13 sonable notice prior to site inspections at offshore  
14 aquaculture facilities pursuant to paragraph (1).  
15 The Secretary shall take into consideration biosecu-  
16 rity concerns and work with the permit holder to en-  
17 sure best inspection practices to ensure safety and  
18 protect cultured species.

19 (3) FACILITIES LOCATED ON THE OUTER CON-  
20 TINENTAL SHELF.—The Secretary of the Interior, or  
21 a designee of such Secretary, is authorized with in-  
22 spection authority under this section for offshore  
23 aquaculture facilities located on the outer conti-  
24 nental shelf.

1           (e) GOVERNMENT ACCESS.—Any Federal Govern-  
2 ment official representing an agency with authority for im-  
3 plementing and enforcing Federal law applicable to off-  
4 shore aquaculture shall have reasonable access to an off-  
5 shore aquaculture facility for which a permit is issued  
6 under this Act for the purpose of enforcing the Federal  
7 law under the official’s jurisdiction or otherwise carrying  
8 out the official’s responsibilities. Such an official, relative  
9 to their jurisdictional authority, may inspect, at reason-  
10 able times, appropriate records, files, papers, permits,  
11 processes, controls, and the offshore aquaculture facility  
12 and may test any feature of the offshore aquaculture facil-  
13 ity, provided testing does not risk incurring damage or po-  
14 tentially compromise the structural integrity of the facility  
15 or the health of cultured species. Each inspection shall be  
16 conducted with reasonable promptness. The permit holder  
17 shall receive timely notification, in writing, of the results  
18 of the inspection.

19           (f) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The Secretary shall make re-  
20 ports and other information received under this Act avail-  
21 able to the public unless the Secretary determines it is  
22 necessary to withhold disclosure to protect confidential  
23 business information or sensitive personal information.  
24 The Secretary shall establish procedures to protect con-

1 fidential business information and sensitive personal infor-  
2 mation from being disclosed.

3 **SEC. 302. MARINE FEED STANDARDS.**

4 (a) **RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.**—Nothing in this  
5 Act shall be construed in derogation of applicable law re-  
6 garding the production of animal feed, and offshore aqua-  
7 culture operations shall comply with all applicable law (in-  
8 cluding regulations).

9 (b) **REQUIREMENTS FOR FISHERIES-DERIVED MA-**  
10 **RINE FEED INGREDIENTS.**—The Secretary shall require  
11 that fish meal, or any fisheries-derived marine feed ingre-  
12 dients (both first-use and trimmings), used at offshore  
13 aquaculture facilities in the exclusive economic zone—

14 (1) are sourced from a sustainably managed  
15 fishery for aquaculture feed;

16 (2) employ traceability sufficient to credibly  
17 demonstrate the ingredients were sourced from a  
18 sustainably managed fishery for aquaculture feed;

19 (3) are harvested and produced without convict,  
20 forced, or indentured labor; and

21 (4) are delivered to the cultured species as part  
22 of a formulated feed.

23 (c) **STUDY ON BEST PRACTICES FOR MARINE**  
24 **FEED.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enact-  
25 ment of the Advancing the Quality and Understanding of

1 American Aquaculture Act, the Secretaries of Commerce  
2 and Agriculture, through the coordinating group, shall  
3 conduct a study of the best management practices related  
4 to sustainable, economic feed for the United States marine  
5 aquaculture industry. The study shall—

6 (1) recommend best practices for sourcing fish  
7 meal from sustainably managed fisheries for aqua-  
8 culture feed;

9 (2) recommend best practices to provide  
10 traceability on the source of fish meal ingredients;

11 (3) recommend best practices for sourcing for-  
12 mulated feed ingredients from domestic sources; and

13 (4) recommend best practices for harvesting  
14 and producing fish meal so that it can be known  
15 that it is harvested and produced without convict,  
16 forced, or indentured labor.

17 (d) REPORT.—Upon completion of the study under  
18 subsection (c), the Secretaries of Commerce and Agri-  
19 culture shall prepare and submit a report containing the  
20 recommendations described in subsection (c) to the Com-  
21 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the  
22 Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the  
23 House of Representatives.

1 **SEC. 303. MARINE USE RIGHTS.**

2 The permit established under section 202 shall be  
3 considered a marine use right, offering security of tenure  
4 for purpose of obtaining investment, transferring permit  
5 to other authorized users, and allowing for operations.

6 **TITLE IV—ADMINISTRATIVE**  
7 **PROVISIONS**

8 **SEC. 401. OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE.**

9 (a) OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE.—The Secretary shall  
10 establish and provide resources for—

11 (1) an Office of Aquaculture within the Na-  
12 tional Marine Fisheries Service at the National Oce-  
13 anic and Atmospheric Administration headquarters  
14 to implement this title; and

15 (2) an Office of Aquaculture presence in each  
16 of the regional fisheries offices of the National Oce-  
17 anic and Atmospheric Administration, which pres-  
18 ence shall, at a minimum, be sufficient to fulfill the  
19 duties under subsection (b), but may be increased to  
20 the extent warranted by the activity and interest of  
21 aquaculture stakeholders in the region.

22 (b) OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE DUTIES.—The Office  
23 of Aquaculture shall—

24 (1) ensure the implementation of this Act;

25 (2) coordinate regulatory, scientific, outreach,  
26 and international issues related to aquaculture with-

1 in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-  
2 tration;

3 (3) collaborate with and leverage existing ef-  
4 forts by the National Sea Grant College program  
5 to—

6 (A) conduct aquaculture outreach, edu-  
7 cation, extension services, and training efforts;  
8 and

9 (B) engage with aquaculture stakeholders  
10 and, from time to time, convene conferences for  
11 aquaculture stakeholders to exchange informa-  
12 tion and ideas; and

13 (4) maintain aquaculture capacity in each of  
14 the regional fisheries offices of the National Oceanic  
15 and Atmospheric Administration, including at least  
16 one Regional Aquaculture Coordinator in each such  
17 office.

18 (c) AQUACULTURE RESEARCH PROGRAM AND DU-  
19 TIES.—In addition to the resources required under sub-  
20 section (a), the Secretary shall establish and provide addi-  
21 tional resources for an aquaculture research program that  
22 draws upon the scientific capacity of National Oceanic and  
23 Atmospheric Administration programs such as the Fish-  
24 eries Science Centers, Sea Grant, and the National Cen-  
25 ters for Coastal and Ocean Science to support the Office

1 of Aquaculture's efforts to implement this title. Specifi-  
2 cally, the program shall—

3 (1) ensure that offshore aquaculture operations  
4 permitted under this title are scientifically monitored  
5 to support the implementation of this Act, evaluate  
6 data, and conduct additional research to support the  
7 development of sustainable offshore aquaculture in  
8 accordance with this title; and

9 (2) administer the research and development  
10 grant program under section 203.

11 (d) AQUACULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE.—The Marine  
12 Fisheries Advisory Committee shall designate the Aqua-  
13 culture Subcommittee as a permanent, standing sub-  
14 committee to serve as an external board to advise the Sec-  
15 retary on offshore aquaculture. The Aquaculture Sub-  
16 committee shall coordinate with the National Sea Grant  
17 Advisory Board, as appropriate.

18 (e) BUDGET PRESENTATION.—The National Oceanic  
19 and Atmospheric Administration shall transmit its budget  
20 request for the Office of Aquaculture as a separate line  
21 with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

22 **SEC. 402. SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall support the  
24 development of sustainable marine aquaculture, consistent  
25 with this Act and other applicable Federal law.

1 (b) MARKETING AND PROMOTION GRANTS.—The  
2 Secretary shall, in consultation with industry, establish  
3 and administer a grant program to support the sale and  
4 public perception of cultured species domestically and  
5 internationally.

6 (c) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary  
7 shall, in consultation with industry, academic institutions,  
8 and the National Sea Grant College Program, develop and  
9 manage a grant program to support the education and  
10 training of individuals with the skills needed to manage  
11 and operate aquaculture facilities.

12 (d) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—The Secretary shall or-  
13 ganize through each regional fisheries office of the Na-  
14 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration a network  
15 of—

16 (1) regional experts and Federal agency con-  
17 tacts, in coordination with relevant organizations  
18 (including the National Sea Grant College Program  
19 under the National Sea Grant College Program Act  
20 (33 U.S.C. 1121 et seq.), the Department of Agri-  
21 culture Regional Aquaculture Centers, institutions of  
22 higher education, and the Cooperative Extension  
23 System of the Department of Agriculture) to provide  
24 technical expertise and extension services on offshore

1 aquaculture and information on Federal permit re-  
2 quirements; and

3 (2) individuals and businesses interested in  
4 aquaculture operations and products to facilitate  
5 professional development, marketing, mentoring op-  
6 portunities, and agency outreach and education on  
7 aquaculture.

8 (e) AQUACULTURE DATABASE.—The Secretary shall  
9 establish and maintain within the Office of Aquaculture  
10 an aquaculture database. The aquaculture database shall  
11 include information on research, technologies, monitoring  
12 techniques, best practices, and advisory board rec-  
13 ommendations. The Secretary shall make the aquaculture  
14 database available in a manner that safeguards confiden-  
15 tial business information. The inclusion of information in  
16 the database under this subsection shall not be considered  
17 to be publication for purposes of subsection (a) or (b) of  
18 section 102 of title 35, United States Code.

19 (f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR OPERATORS.—The  
20 Secretary shall organize through the Office of Aquaculture  
21 and the Regional Aquaculture Coordinators, a program to  
22 provide technical assistance to operators in each regional  
23 fisheries office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
24 Administration. The programs shall be tailored to meet  
25 the unique needs of each region, but shall conduct indi-

1 vidual consultations with each operator in the region on  
2 a regular basis to assess the status of the operator's busi-  
3 ness, and if appropriate, identify available resources to  
4 support the operator, such as regional experts, university  
5 extension agents, and grant opportunities.

6 (g) CAPITAL MARKETS.—

7 (1) OUTREACH TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.—

8 In order to enhance access to capital markets, the  
9 Secretary shall provide financial institutions and in-  
10 vestment firms with objective, science-based informa-  
11 tion on offshore aquaculture and the Federal regu-  
12 latory regime that governs it.

13 (2) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS.—In addition, the Sec-  
14 retary shall provide economic analysis to answer  
15 queries regarding the value of offshore aquaculture  
16 assets to secure financing, such as equipment, gov-  
17 ernmental permits, inventory, and intellectual prop-  
18 erty.

19 (3) COLLABORATION.—In order to achieve the  
20 goals of this subsection, the Secretary is encouraged  
21 to collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture, the  
22 Secretary of the Treasury, and the regional networks  
23 established under subsection (d).

1 **SEC. 403. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION.**

2 The Secretary shall conduct outreach on sustainable  
3 offshore aquaculture to promote understanding, science-  
4 based decision making, and commercial adoption. The Sec-  
5 retary shall use appropriate means to engage—

- 6 (1) the general public;
- 7 (2) community leaders;
- 8 (3) governmental officials;
- 9 (4) the business community;
- 10 (5) the academic community; and
- 11 (6) the nonprofit sector.

12 **SEC. 404. ADMINISTRATION.**

13 (a) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary—

- 14 (1) shall initiate a rulemaking process, not later  
15 than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act,  
16 after consulting with relevant Federal agencies,  
17 coastal States, federally recognized Indian Tribes  
18 within the meaning of such term in Executive Order  
19 13175 (65 Fed. Reg. 67249), the Commonwealth of  
20 Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the United States  
21 Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the  
22 Northern Mariana Islands, Regional Fishery Man-  
23 agement Councils as established under section 302  
24 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and  
25 Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852), and interstate

1 fisheries commissions to implement this Act, includ-  
2 ing—

3 (A) procedures to issue, modify, deny, re-  
4 voke, or suspend an offshore aquaculture per-  
5 mit in accordance with this Act;

6 (B) procedures to coordinate the offshore  
7 aquaculture permitting process, with similar or  
8 complementary activities administered by other  
9 Federal agencies, federally recognized Indian  
10 Tribes, and coastal States;

11 (C) procedures to monitor and evaluate  
12 permit compliance to verify and confirm compli-  
13 ance with the requirements of this Act;

14 (D) procedures to transfer an offshore  
15 aquaculture permit from an original permit  
16 holder to a person that meets the requirements  
17 under section 202;

18 (E) procedures to minimize conflicts with  
19 existing uses in the exclusive economic zone;

20 (F) procedures to consider public-private  
21 partnerships; and

22 (G) standards for determining what types  
23 of feed may be employed in an offshore aqua-  
24 culture facility in accordance with the require-  
25 ments of section 302;

1           (2) shall promulgate such additional regulations  
2           as are necessary and appropriate to carry out this  
3           Act; and

4           (3) may amend a regulation at any time.

5           (b) AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into  
6           and perform such contracts, leases, or cooperative agree-  
7           ments, and make and receive such grants or funds, as may  
8           be necessary to carry out this Act.

9           (c) USE OF CONTRIBUTED GOVERNMENTAL RE-  
10          SOURCES.—For enforcement under this Act, the Secretary  
11          may use, with consent and with or without reimbursement,  
12          and consistent with applicable law, the land, services,  
13          equipment, personnel, and facilities of—

14                 (1) any department, agency, or instrumentality  
15                 of the United States;

16                 (2) any State, local government, Tribal govern-  
17                 ment, territory, or possession (or any political sub-  
18                 division thereof);

19                 (3) any foreign government; or

20                 (4) an international organization.

21          (d) AUTHORITY TO USE GRANT FUNDS.—

22                 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under  
23                 paragraph (2), the Secretary may apply for, accept,  
24                 and obligate research grant funding from any Fed-

1       eral source operating a competitive grant program if  
2       the funding furthers the purposes of this Act.

3           (2) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may not apply  
4       for, accept, or obligate any research grant funding  
5       under paragraph (1) if the granting agency lacks au-  
6       thority to grant funds to Federal agencies or for any  
7       purpose, or subject to any condition, that is prohib-  
8       ited by law or regulation.

9           (3) MATCHING GRANT FUNDS.—Appropriated  
10      funds may be used to satisfy a requirement to match  
11      grant funds with recipient agency funds, except that  
12      no grant may be accepted that requires a commit-  
13      ment in advance of appropriations.

14          (4) ACCOUNTS.—Funds received from a grant  
15      shall be deposited in the National Oceanic and At-  
16      mospheric Administration account that serves to ac-  
17      complish the purpose for which the grant was  
18      awarded.

19          (e) RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this  
20      Act shall be construed to displace, supersede, or limit the  
21      jurisdiction, responsibilities, or rights of any Federal or  
22      State agency, or Indian Tribe or Alaska Native organiza-  
23      tion, under any Federal law or treaty.

1 **SEC. 405. REPORT AND PERMIT TERMS.**

2 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date  
3 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue a report  
4 to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee  
5 on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate  
6 and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House  
7 of Representatives regarding implementation of this Act.

8 The report shall include—

9 (1) the number of offshore aquaculture permits  
10 applied for, granted, denied, and retired, together  
11 with a brief description of the circumstances of each;

12 (2) any and all enforcement actions undertaken,  
13 and the disposition of each;

14 (3) the number of aquaculture opportunity  
15 areas established under section 102, together with a  
16 brief description of the circumstances of each;

17 (4) results from any grants awarded under this  
18 Act;

19 (5) the Secretary's assessment of the state of  
20 offshore aquaculture in the United States;

21 (6) the Secretary's assessment of United States  
22 offshore aquaculture in comparison to offshore aqua-  
23 culture in other nations; and

24 (7) the Secretary's recommendations to improve  
25 United States offshore aquaculture.

1 (b) DETERMINATION REGARDING PERMITS.—In ad-  
2 dition to the requirements of subsection (a), the Secretary  
3 may make the following determinations regarding permit  
4 terms for offshore aquaculture:

5 (1) The effect of shortening or lengthening per-  
6 mit terms on the risk of harm to the environment.

7 (2) The effect of shortening or lengthening per-  
8 mit terms on industry's access to capital markets.

9 (3) Whether a change to the permit terms es-  
10 tablished in this Act is warranted.

11 **SEC. 406. FEDERAL COORDINATION.**

12 (a) RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.—Nothing in this  
13 section shall be construed in derogation of law in effect  
14 on the date of enactment of this Act that is applicable  
15 to offshore aquaculture operations, and the unified permit-  
16 ting and review process established under this section shall  
17 not affect the timelines or standards established under  
18 other laws.

19 (b) COORDINATION.—Subject to subsection (a), the  
20 Secretary of Commerce shall coordinate with the Depart-  
21 ment of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the  
22 Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of En-  
23 gineers, the Food and Drug Administration, and the de-  
24 partment in which the U.S. Coast Guard is operating to  
25 simplify the Federal permitting process for offshore aqua-

1 culture. The Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture,  
2 Health and Human Services, and the department in which  
3 the U.S. Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of  
4 the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chief of  
5 Engineers shall cooperate with the Secretary of Commerce  
6 to implement this section.

7 (c) UNIFIED PERMITTING AND REVIEW PROCESS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
9 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries of  
10 Commerce, Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human  
11 Services, and the department in which the U.S.  
12 Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of the  
13 Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chief of  
14 Engineers shall, through the Secretary of Commerce,  
15 initiate, subject to the requirements of subsection  
16 (a), a rulemaking for all permits administered by  
17 such agency heads relating to offshore aquaculture  
18 for a unified process, public notice, and public com-  
19 ment for—

20 (A) initial issuance of permits;

21 (B) renewal of permits; and

22 (C) transfer of permits.

23 (2) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Commerce,  
24 through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
25 ministration, shall serve as the lead Federal agency

1 for purposes of providing information on Federal  
2 permitting requirements for aquaculture in Federal  
3 waters.

4 (3) INFORMAL REVIEW AND COMPATIBILITY  
5 ANALYSIS.—The Secretary of Commerce, acting  
6 through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-  
7 ministration, shall convene representatives of the  
8 Department of the Interior, the Department of Agri-  
9 culture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the  
10 Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department in  
11 which the U.S. Coast Guard is operating to provide  
12 prospective permit applicants an opportunity for in-  
13 formal consultation with Federal agencies. The Sec-  
14 retary of Commerce may invite representatives from  
15 other Federal agencies as necessary or advisable.  
16 Nothing in this subsection shall preclude an appli-  
17 cant or a prospective applicant from contacting Fed-  
18 eral agencies directly.

19 (4) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.—To the extent  
20 allowable under the National Environmental Policy  
21 Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), any environ-  
22 mental analysis or environmental impact statement  
23 required under such Act for offshore aquaculture ac-  
24 tivities shall be conducted through a single, consoli-  
25 dated environmental review and the National Oce-

1       anic and Atmospheric Administration, through the  
2       Office of Aquaculture and associated divisions, shall  
3       serve as the lead Federal agency.

4           (5) COORDINATION OF PERMIT REVIEWS.—To  
5       the extent practicable under this Act and all other  
6       applicable laws and regulations, Federal agencies  
7       with permitting requirements applicable to offshore  
8       aquaculture facilities shall coordinate their review  
9       processes in order to provide a timely response to  
10      applicants.

11 **SEC. 407. PROHIBITED ACTS.**

12      It is unlawful for any person—

13           (1) to violate any provision of this Act or any  
14      regulation or permit issued pursuant to this Act;

15           (2) to refuse to permit any officer authorized to  
16      enforce the provisions of this Act (in accordance  
17      with section 408) to access an offshore aquaculture  
18      facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or other  
19      conveyance, subject to such person's control, for pur-  
20      poses of conducting any search or inspection in con-  
21      nection with the enforcement of this Act;

22           (3) to assault, resist, oppose, impede, intimi-  
23      date, or interfere with any such authorized officer in  
24      the conduct of any search or inspection described in  
25      paragraph (2);

1           (4) to resist a lawful arrest for any act prohib-  
2           ited by this section;

3           (5) to ship, transport, offer for sale, sell, pur-  
4           chase, import, export, or have custody, control, or  
5           possession of, any cultured species produced, taken,  
6           retained, or possessed in violation of this Act;

7           (6) to interfere with, delay, or prevent, by any  
8           means, the apprehension or arrest of another person,  
9           knowing that such other person has committed any  
10          act prohibited by this section;

11          (7) to make or submit to the Secretary or the  
12          Governor of a State false information regarding any  
13          matter that the Secretary or Governor is considering  
14          in the course of carrying out this Act;

15          (8) to make any false statement or provide any  
16          false information on, or in connection with, an appli-  
17          cation, declaration, record, or report; or

18          (9) without authorization, to remove, damage,  
19          or tamper with or attempt to remove, damage, or  
20          tamper with—

21                 (A) an offshore aquaculture facility owned  
22                 by another person, which is located in the exclu-  
23                 sive economic zone, including any component  
24                 thereof; or

1 (B) cultured species contained in such fa-  
2 cility or component thereof.

3 **SEC. 408. ENFORCEMENT.**

4 (a) RESPONSIBILITY.—The provisions of this Act  
5 shall be enforced by the Secretary and the Secretary of  
6 the department in which the Coast Guard is operating.  
7 In enforcing this Act, such Secretaries may by agreement  
8 utilize, on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, the  
9 personnel, services, equipment (including aircraft and ves-  
10 sels), and facilities of any other Federal agency, including  
11 all elements of the Department of Defense, or of any State  
12 agency. Such Secretaries shall, and the head of any Fed-  
13 eral or State agency that has entered into an agreement  
14 with either such Secretary under this section may (if the  
15 agreement so provides), authorize officers to enforce the  
16 provisions of this Act or any regulation promulgated under  
17 this Act.

18 (b) POWERS OF AUTHORIZED OFFICERS.—Any offi-  
19 cer who is authorized under subsection (a) to enforce the  
20 provisions of this Act may, with or without a warrant or  
21 other process, as authorized by law—

22 (1) arrest any person, if the officer has reason-  
23 able cause to believe that such person has committed  
24 an act prohibited by section 407;

1           (2) board, search or inspect, any offshore aqua-  
2           culture facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or  
3           other conveyance (including its gear, furniture, ap-  
4           purtenances, stores, records, and cargo) which is  
5           subject to the provisions of this Act;

6           (3) seize any vessel, or other conveyance (to-  
7           gether with its gear, furniture, appurtenances,  
8           stores, records, and cargo) used or employed in, or  
9           with respect to which it reasonably appears that  
10          such vessel was used or employed in, the violation of  
11          any provision of this Act;

12          (4) seize any cultured species or seafood prod-  
13          uct (wherever found) taken, produced, imported, ex-  
14          ported, transported, sold, received, acquired, or pur-  
15          chased in any manner, in connection with or as a re-  
16          sult of the violation of any provision of this Act;

17          (5) seize any evidence related to any violation  
18          of any provision of this Act;

19          (6) detain any cultured species or seafood prod-  
20          uct to determine compliance with this Act;

21          (7) search and seize, in accordance with any  
22          guidelines which may be issued by the Attorney Gen-  
23          eral;

24          (8) access, directly or indirectly, for enforce-  
25          ment purposes any data or information required to

1 be provided or reported under this Act or regulations  
2 promulgated under this Act, including data from  
3 vessel or facility monitoring systems, automatic iden-  
4 tification systems, long-range identification and  
5 tracking systems, or any similar system;

6 (9) execute and serve any subpoena, arrest war-  
7 rant, search warrant issued in accordance with Rule  
8 41 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, or  
9 other warrant or civil or criminal process issued by  
10 any officer or court of competent jurisdiction; and

11 (10) exercise any other lawful authority.

12 (c) ISSUANCE OF CITATIONS.—If any authorized offi-  
13 cer finds that a person, offshore aquaculture facility, asso-  
14 ciated onshore facility, vessel, or other conveyance is en-  
15 gaging or has been engaged in the violation of any provi-  
16 sion of this Act, such officer may issue a citation to the  
17 owner or operator of such vessel in lieu of proceeding  
18 under subsection (f), (g), or (h). If a permit has been  
19 issued pursuant to this Act for such facility or conveyance,  
20 such officer shall note the issuance of any citation under  
21 this subsection, including the date thereof and the reason  
22 therefor, on the permit. The Secretary shall maintain a  
23 record of all citations issued pursuant to this subsection.

24 (d) SUBPOENAS.—For the purposes of conducting  
25 any investigation or hearing under this Act, or any other

1 marine resource law enforced by the Secretary, the Sec-  
2 retary may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testi-  
3 mony of witnesses and the production of relevant papers,  
4 photographs, records, books, and documents in any form,  
5 including those in electronic, optical or magnetic form, and  
6 may administer oaths. Witnesses summoned shall be paid  
7 the same fees and mileage that are paid to witnesses in  
8 the courts of the United States. In case of contempt or  
9 refusal to obey a subpoena served upon any person pursu-  
10 ant to this subsection, the district court of the United  
11 States for any district in which such person is found, re-  
12 sides, or transacts business, upon application by the  
13 United States and after notice to such person, shall have  
14 jurisdiction to issue an order requiring such person to ap-  
15 pear and give testimony before the Secretary or to appear  
16 and produce documents before the Secretary, or both, and  
17 any failure to obey such order of the court may be pun-  
18 ished by such court as a contempt thereof.

19 (e) DISTRICT COURT JURISDICTION.—The several  
20 district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction  
21 over any actions arising under this Act. For purposes of  
22 this section, for Hawaii or any possession of the United  
23 States in the Pacific Ocean, the appropriate court is the  
24 United States District Court for the District of Hawaii,  
25 except that in the case of Guam and Wake Island, the

1 appropriate court is the United States District Court for  
2 the District of Guam, and in the case of the Northern  
3 Mariana Islands, the appropriate court is the United  
4 States District Court for the District of the Northern  
5 Mariana Islands. Each violation shall be a separate of-  
6 fense and the offense shall be deemed to have been com-  
7 mitted not only in the district where the violation first oc-  
8 curred, but also in any other district as authorized by law.  
9 Any offenses not committed in any district are subject to  
10 the venue provisions of section 3238 of title 18, United  
11 States Code.

12 (f) CIVIL ENFORCEMENT.—

13 (1) CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—Any person who is  
15 found by the Secretary, after notice and oppor-  
16 tunity for a hearing in accordance with section  
17 554 of title 5, United States Code, to have com-  
18 mitted an act prohibited by section 407 shall be  
19 liable to the United States for a civil penalty.  
20 The amount of the civil penalty shall not exceed  
21 \$37,500 for each violation. Each day of a con-  
22 tinuing violation shall constitute a separate of-  
23 fense. The amount of such civil penalty shall be  
24 assessed by the Secretary, by written notice. In  
25 determining the amount of such penalty, the

1 Secretary shall take into account the nature,  
2 circumstances, extent, and gravity of the pro-  
3 hibited acts committed and, with respect to the  
4 violator, the degree of culpability, any history of  
5 prior offenses, and such other matters as jus-  
6 tice may require. In assessing such penalty the  
7 Secretary may also consider any information  
8 provided by the violator relating to the ability  
9 of the violator to pay, provided that the infor-  
10 mation is served on the Secretary at least 30  
11 days prior to an administrative hearing.

12 (B) COMPROMISE OR OTHER ACTION BY  
13 SECRETARY.—The Secretary may compromise,  
14 modify, or remit, with or without conditions,  
15 any civil administrative penalty which is or may  
16 be imposed under this subsection and that has  
17 not been referred to the Attorney General for  
18 further enforcement action.

19 (2) IN REM JURISDICTION.—An offshore aqua-  
20 culture facility, associated onshore facility, vessel, or  
21 other conveyance (including its gear, furniture, ap-  
22 purtenances, stores, records, and cargo) used in the  
23 commission of an act prohibited by section 407 shall  
24 be liable in rem for any civil penalty assessed for  
25 such violation under this section and may be pro-

1           ceeded against in any district court of the United  
2           States having jurisdiction thereof.

3           (3) COLLECTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PEN-  
4           ALTIES.—If any person fails to pay an assessment  
5           of a civil penalty under paragraph (1) after it has  
6           become a final and unappealable order, the Sec-  
7           retary shall refer the matter to the Attorney Gen-  
8           eral, who shall recover the amount assessed (plus in-  
9           terest at current prevailing rates from the date of  
10          the final order) in any appropriate district court of  
11          the United States. In such action, the validity and  
12          appropriateness of the final order imposing the civil  
13          penalty shall not be subject to review. Any person  
14          who fails to pay, on a timely basis, the amount of  
15          an assessment of a civil penalty shall be required to  
16          pay, in addition to such amount and interest, attor-  
17          ney's fees and costs for collection proceedings and a  
18          quarterly nonpayment penalty for each quarter dur-  
19          ing which such failure to pay persists. Such non-  
20          payment penalty shall be in an amount equal to 20  
21          percent of the aggregate amount of such person's  
22          penalties and nonpayment penalties that are unpaid  
23          as of the beginning of such quarter.

24          (4) PERMIT SANCTIONS.—

1           (A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to any  
2 case in which an offshore aquaculture facility,  
3 associated onshore facility, vessel, or other con-  
4 veyance was used in the commission of an act  
5 prohibited under section 407, the owner or op-  
6 erator of an offshore aquaculture facility, asso-  
7 ciated onshore facility, vessel, or other convey-  
8 ance (or any other person who has been issued  
9 or has applied for a permit under this Act) has  
10 acted in violation of section 407, or any civil  
11 penalty, criminal fine, or amount in settlement  
12 of a civil forfeiture imposed under this Act on  
13 a person, offshore aquaculture facility, associ-  
14 ated onshore facility, vessel, or other convey-  
15 ance that has been issued or has applied for a  
16 permit under this Act has not been paid and is  
17 overdue, the Secretary may—

18           (i) revoke any permit issued with re-  
19 spect to such person, offshore aquaculture  
20 facility, associated onshore facility, vessel,  
21 other conveyance, with or without preju-  
22 dice to the issuance of subsequent permits;

23           (ii) suspend such permit for a period  
24 of time considered by the Secretary to be  
25 appropriate;

1 (iii) deny such permit; or

2 (iv) impose additional conditions and  
3 restrictions on such permit.

4 (B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In imposing a  
5 sanction under this paragraph, the Secretary  
6 shall take into account the nature, cir-  
7 cumstances, extent, and gravity of the prohib-  
8 ited acts for which the sanction is imposed and,  
9 with respect to the violator, the degree of culpa-  
10 bility, any history of prior offenses, and such  
11 other matters as justice may require.

12 (C) EFFECT OF TRANSFER OF OWNER-  
13 SHIP.—Transfer of ownership of an offshore  
14 aquaculture facility, associated onshore facility,  
15 vessel, or other conveyance, by sale or other-  
16 wise, shall not extinguish any permit sanction  
17 that is in effect or is pending at the time of  
18 transfer of ownership. Before executing the  
19 transfer of ownership of a facility or convey-  
20 ance, by sale or otherwise, the owner shall dis-  
21 close in writing to the prospective transferee the  
22 existence of any permit sanction that will be in  
23 effect or pending with respect to the facility or  
24 conveyance at the time of the transfer.

1                   (D) PAYMENT OF PENALTY OR FINE.—In  
2                   the case of any permit that is suspended under  
3                   this paragraph for nonpayment of a civil pen-  
4                   alty or criminal fine, the Secretary shall rein-  
5                   state the permit upon payment of the penalty  
6                   or fine and interest thereon at the prevailing  
7                   rate.

8                   (E) HEARING.—No sanction shall be im-  
9                   posed under this paragraph unless there has  
10                  been a prior opportunity for a hearing on the  
11                  facts underlying the violation for which the  
12                  sanction is imposed, either in conjunction with  
13                  a civil penalty proceeding under this section or  
14                  otherwise.

15                 (5) REVIEW OF CIVIL PENALTY.—Any person  
16                 against whom a civil penalty is assessed under this  
17                 subsection or against whom a permit sanction is im-  
18                 posed under this subsection (other than a permit  
19                 suspension for nonpayment of penalty or fine) may  
20                 obtain review thereof in the United States district  
21                 court for the appropriate district by filing a com-  
22                 plaint against the Secretary in such court within 30  
23                 days from the date of such order that constitutes a  
24                 final agency action. The Secretary shall promptly  
25                 file in such court a certified copy of the record upon

1       which such violation was found or such penalty im-  
2       posed, as provided in section 2112 of title 28,  
3       United States Code. The findings and order of the  
4       Secretary shall be set aside by such court if they are  
5       not found to be supported by substantial evidence,  
6       as provided in section 706(2) of title 5, United  
7       States Code.

8               (6) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—Upon the request of  
9       the Secretary, the Attorney General of the United  
10       States may commence a civil action for appropriate  
11       relief, including a permanent or temporary injunc-  
12       tion, for any violation of this Act (including regula-  
13       tions).

14       (g) FORFEITURE.—

15               (1) CRIMINAL FORFEITURE.—

16                       (A) IN GENERAL.—A person who is con-  
17       victed of an offense in violation of this Act shall  
18       forfeit to the United States—

19                               (i) any property, real or personal, con-  
20       stituting or traceable to the gross proceeds  
21       taken, obtained, or retained, in connection  
22       with or as a result of the offense, includ-  
23       ing, without limitation, any cultured spe-  
24       cies (or the fair market value thereof); and

1                   (ii) any property, real or personal,  
2                   used or intended to be used, in any man-  
3                   ner, to commit or facilitate the commission  
4                   of the offense, including, without limita-  
5                   tion, any vessel (including the vessel's  
6                   equipment, stores, catch and cargo), vehi-  
7                   cle, aircraft, or other means of transpor-  
8                   tation.

9                   (B) APPLICABILITY OF CONTROLLED SUB-  
10                  STANCES ACT.—Pursuant to section 2461(c) of  
11                  title 28, United States Code, the provisions of  
12                  section 413 of the Controlled Substances Act  
13                  (21 U.S.C. 853) other than subsection (d)  
14                  thereof shall apply to criminal forfeitures under  
15                  this section.

16                  (2) CIVIL FORFEITURE.—

17                  (A) IN GENERAL.—The property set forth  
18                  below shall be subject to administrative or judi-  
19                  cial forfeiture to the United States in accord-  
20                  ance with the provisions of chapter 46 of title  
21                  18, United States Code, and no property right  
22                  shall exist in it:

23                         (i) Any property, real or personal,  
24                         constituting or traceable to the gross pro-  
25                         ceeds taken, obtained, or retained, in con-

1                   nection with or as a result of a violation of  
2                   this Act, including, without limitation, any  
3                   fish (or the fair market value thereof).

4                   (ii) Any property, real or personal,  
5                   used or intended to be used, in any man-  
6                   ner, to commit or facilitate the commission  
7                   of a violation of this Act, including, with-  
8                   out limitation, any vessel (including the  
9                   vessel's equipment, stores, catch and  
10                  cargo), vehicle, aircraft, or other means of  
11                  transportation.

12                  (B) APPLICATION OF THE CUSTOMS  
13                  LAWS.—All provisions of law relating to seizure,  
14                  summary judgment, and forfeiture and con-  
15                  demnation for violation of the customs laws, the  
16                  disposition of the property forfeited or con-  
17                  demned or the proceeds from the sale thereof,  
18                  the remission or mitigation of such forfeitures,  
19                  and the compromise of claims shall apply to sei-  
20                  zures and forfeitures incurred, or alleged to  
21                  have been incurred, under the provisions of this  
22                  Act, insofar as applicable and not inconsistent  
23                  with the provisions hereof. For seizures and for-  
24                  feitures of property under this section by the  
25                  Secretary, such duties as are imposed upon the

1 customs officer or any other person with respect  
2 to the seizure and forfeiture of property under  
3 the customs law may be performed by such offi-  
4 cers as are designated by the Secretary or,  
5 upon request of the Secretary, by any other  
6 agency that has authority to manage and dis-  
7 pose of seized property.

8 (C) PRESUMPTION.—For the purposes of  
9 this section there is a rebuttable presumption  
10 that all cultured species, or components thereof,  
11 found in an offshore aquaculture facility or on  
12 board a vessel or other conveyance that is used  
13 or seized in connection with a violation of this  
14 Act were produced, taken, obtained, trans-  
15 ported, or retained in violation of this Act.

16 (h) CRIMINAL ENFORCEMENT.—

17 (1) IMPRISONMENT.—Any person (other than a  
18 foreign government agency, or entity wholly owned  
19 and controlled by a foreign government) who know-  
20 ingly commits any act prohibited under section 407  
21 shall be imprisoned for not more than 5 years or  
22 fined not more than \$500,000 for individuals or  
23 \$1,000,000 for an organization, or both, except that,  
24 if in the commission of any such offense the indi-  
25 vidual uses a dangerous weapon, engages in conduct

1 that causes bodily injury to any officer authorized to  
2 enforce the provisions of this Act, or places any such  
3 officer in fear of imminent bodily injury, the max-  
4 imum term of imprisonment is not more than 10  
5 years.

6 (2) FINE AND IMPRISONMENT.—Any person  
7 (other than a foreign government agency, or entity  
8 wholly owned and controlled by a foreign govern-  
9 ment) who violates a provision under section 407  
10 and who, in the exercise of due care should know  
11 that such person’s conduct violates such provision,  
12 shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, or  
13 imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

14 (i) JOINT ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENTS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Governor of an eligible  
16 State may apply to the Secretary for execution of a  
17 joint enforcement agreement with the Secretary that  
18 will authorize the deputization and funding of State  
19 law enforcement officers with marine law enforce-  
20 ment responsibilities to perform duties of the Sec-  
21 retary relating to law enforcement provisions under  
22 this title or any other marine resource law enforced  
23 by the Secretary. Upon receiving an application  
24 meeting the requirements of this subsection, the Sec-

1       retary may enter into a joint enforcement agreement  
2       with the requesting State.

3           (2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—A State is eligible to  
4       participate in the cooperative enforcement agree-  
5       ments under this section if it is in, or bordering on,  
6       the Atlantic Ocean (including the Caribbean Sea),  
7       the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the Gulf of  
8       Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the  
9       Great Lakes.

10          (3) REQUIREMENTS.—Joint enforcement agree-  
11       ments executed under paragraph (1)—

12           (A) shall be consistent with the purposes  
13       and intent of this section to the extent applica-  
14       ble to the regulated activities;

15           (B) may include specifications for joint  
16       management responsibilities as provided by the  
17       first section of Public Law 91–412 (15 U.S.C.  
18       1525); and

19           (C) shall provide for confidentiality of data  
20       and information submitted to the State under  
21       this Act.

22          (4) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary  
23       shall include in each joint enforcement agreement an  
24       allocation of funds to assist in management of the  
25       agreement. The allocation shall be fairly distributed

1 among all eligible States participating in cooperative  
2 enforcement agreements under this subsection, based  
3 upon consideration of Federal marine enforcement  
4 needs, the specific marine conservation enforcement  
5 needs of each participating eligible State, and the  
6 capacity of the State to undertake the marine en-  
7 forcement mission and assist with enforcement  
8 needs. The agreement may provide for amounts to  
9 be withheld by the Secretary for the cost of any  
10 technical or other assistance provided to the State  
11 by the Secretary under the agreement.

12 **SEC. 409. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-  
14 retary for the purpose of carrying out this Act—

- 15 (1) \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- 16 (2) \$65,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
- 17 (3) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;
- 18 (4) \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2027; and
- 19 (5) \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.