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### **House Bill Would Carve Oceans into Floating Factory Fish Farms**

*AQUAA Act paves the way for industrialization of marine waters,  
threatens local fishing businesses and ecosystems*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN) has [introduced a bill](#) that would authorize the federal government to issue permits for industrial ocean finfish farms. These facilities would use giant floating cages to cultivate fish in ocean waters all around the U.S. coast. Chemicals, diseases and untreated waste from these farms flow into the open ocean and pose environmental hazards and health risks to people and wildlife and threaten the livelihood of local fishermen and coastal communities.

The [Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American Aquaculture](#) (AQUAA) Act, H.R. 6191, faces strong opposition from the [Don't Cage Our Ocean Coalition](#), which consists of fishing groups, indigenous people, and organizations involved in consumer advocacy, food policy, farming and conservation. A broad coalition of groups delivered a [letter to Congress](#) before similar legislation was introduced in the Senate in 2018 calling for legislators to protect the ocean and oppose offshore fish farming.

“There is sweeping opposition to this destructive industry, and for good reason,” said **Hallie Templeton, Senior Oceans Campaigner for Friends of the Earth**. “Industrial ocean fish farms contaminate our waters with pharmaceutical drugs, toxic chemicals and escaped farmed fish. Other countries are backing away from the industry after realizing its devastating impacts. There is absolutely no need to bring it to the U.S., especially at a time when our nation is facing the impacts of COVID-19. While the rest of our nation focuses on urgent health concerns, the aquaculture industry is exploiting this crisis and attempting to push this harmful bill under the radar.”

“Opening federal waters to fish farming operations might be profitable for a few big businesses, but it would devastate the health of the ocean, the wild capture fishing industry, and surrounding communities,” said **Shannon Eldredge, Board Member of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance**.

“This isn’t the first time the aquaculture industry and their friends in agribusiness have tried to push factory fish farms into U.S. waters,” said **Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch**. “Waiting a few years doesn’t make this idea any less dangerous. Congress must not allow this irresponsible bill to give away our public resources to another polluting industry.”

“Congress should stop the AQUAA Act now — this is an outdated, dangerous and unnecessary method of raising fish,” said **Marianne Cufone, Executive Director of Recirculating Farms Coalition**. “While increasing availability of domestic seafood for U.S. consumers is an important goal, political leaders have a responsibility to invest in more sustainable ways to produce seafood than factory-style farming in the ocean.”

"I've been growing soybeans in Iowa for 42 years," said **George Naylor, former president of the National Family Farm Coalition**. "Using soybeans to feed factory farm livestock, whether chickens, hogs, cattle, or now fish, does not benefit family farmers. More cheap soybeans will simply be produced unsustainably in other parts of the world, such as the destructive production taking place in the precious Amazon rainforest. The AQUAA Act will only add local fishermen to the list of agribusiness victims."

The controversial AQUAA Act would expand the scope, and indeed, defeat the purpose of the Magnuson Stevens Act — a law that was designed to conserve and manage fisheries across the country. In a pending lawsuit over the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's authority to regulate offshore fish farming in the Gulf of Mexico under the Magnuson Stevens Act, a Louisiana federal court has already ruled that the statute only provides authority to the agency to regulate traditional fishing activities. The government has appealed the decision.

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#### **About Don't Cage Our Ocean Coalition**

The Don't Cage Our Ocean Coalition is a diverse group of national organizations joining together to fight against legislation that would industrialize our oceans and allow the growth of the harmful offshore marine finfish aquaculture industry. Learn more at <https://dontcageourocean.org>.

#### **About Recirculating Farms Coalition**

The Recirculating Farms Coalition is a collaborative group of farmers, educators, non-profit organizations and many others committed to building innovative local sources of healthy, accessible food. Through research, education and advocacy, RFC works to support the development of eco-efficient farms that use clean recycled water as the basis to grow food and create stable jobs in green business. Learn more at [www.recirculatingfarms.org](http://www.recirculatingfarms.org).

#### **About Friends of the Earth**

Friends of the Earth strives for a more healthy and just world. As an outspoken leader in the environmental and progressive communities, FOE engages the public, media and policymakers to build long-term political power. Learn more at [foe.org](http://foe.org).

#### **About Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance**

The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance is a fishermen-led organization building a broad movement toward healthy fisheries and fishing communities. NAMA works to build deep and trusting relationships with community-based fishermen, crew, fishworkers and allies to create effective policy and market strategies. Learn more at [www.namanet.org](http://www.namanet.org).

#### **About Food & Water Watch**

Food & Water Watch is a national advocacy organization with a grassroots approach to mobilizing the public to support bold solutions to the most pressing food, water, and climate problems of our time. Learn more at [www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org).