

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Public Letter to Fulton Fish Market Condemning Claim of Community Supported Fishery

Gloucester, MA: Today, individuals representing 76 businesses and organizations along with the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA) delivered a public letter to Fulton Street Fish Market asking them to discontinue their “Community Supported Fishery” (CSF) marketing campaign on the basis of “dishonest and values-deprived” advertising. The letter, backed by a diverse group of seafood businesses, celebrity chefs, marine conservation organizations, and community supported fisheries, claims that Fulton Street Market is operating outside the fundamental components of a CSF in an attempt to capitalize on the boat-to-plate trend that has been growing in the US. Instead of adopting the true values of CSFs, Fulton has openly decried (<https://csf.fultonfishmarket.com/index.php/about-us>) those values-based practices on their website by highlighting their discrepancies with LocalCatch.org’s defining components of CSFs.

LocalCatch.org, a network of CSFs and community fishing businesses, define CSFs as values-based, grassroots, direct marketing initiatives that connect licensed commercial fishermen to members of the community. It is a seafood supply system that establishes a fully transparent chain of custody from boat to plate for local, wild, traceable domestic seafood that ensures fishers receive a fair price for their catch.

Brett Tolley, NAMA Community Organizer, expressed his concerns about Fulton’s new CSF-labeled seafood, “The new and controversial CSF marketing tactic used by the Bronx seafood conglomerate has fishermen, coastal communities, and ocean activists concerned that Fulton’s greenwashing of the CSF model is a co-optation of the values aligning CSF businesses and will negatively impact those who uphold the values of CSFs and are holding true to the CSF business model.”

The topic of sustainable seafood is hardly irrelevant in today’s food system. As the House moves to reauthorize the Magnuson Stevens Act (“Fish Bill”), NOAA’s fishery managers are deciding how to move forward on a fisheries quagmire in New Bedford, MA where fishing magnate Carlos Rafael, (self-proclaimed as “The Godfather”) pleaded guilty to 28 offenses including conspiracy, falsely labeling fish, bulk cash smuggling, tax evasion, and falsifying federal records. This summer in the Pacific Northwest, massive amounts of farmed non-native Atlantic salmon escaped a fish pen, a jailbreak that exposes the systemic flaws (<http://onefishfoundation.org/2017/08/farmed-salmon-jailbreak-exposes-systemic-industry-flaws/>) in industrial finfish aquaculture and the seafood supply system as a whole. Each of these has raised the attention of what sustainable seafood really means.

Marsh Skeele, Vice President of Sitka Salmon Shares, weighs in on how the public can make smart choices about their seafood purchases in a food system consumed by false-labeling tactics: “Collectively we encourage the public to avoid greenwashing pitfalls by learning more about the seafood you eat. Wherever you’re purchasing seafood, ask for the name of the boat the seafood came from. If they can’t provide you with the name of the boat, they lack a transparent and traceable supply chain and therefore have no way of telling you you’re truly eating sustainable seafood.”

Local Catch is a non-profit network of CSFs, fishermen, researchers, organizers, and consumers from across North America. They seek to increase the visibility and viability of community-based fishermen and aim to provide assistance to individuals and organizations that need support implementing locally-relevant businesses. You can find Local Catch aligned businesses near you using the map tool on their website, Localcatch.org.

NAMA is a fishermen-led organization building a broad movement toward healthy fisheries, and fishing communities. www.namanet.org

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