

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Steven Bellone
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 25, 2017

Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
Mr. Kevin Law and Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chairs
c/o Empire State Development
150 Motor Parkway, Suite 311
Hauppauge, New York 11788

Dear Messrs. Law and Rabinowitz:

I am writing in support of Manna Fish Farms, Inc. application for funding through Empire State Development to purchase submersible cages and mooring equipment for their proposed offshore fish farm. Manna Fish Farms will be the first offshore finfish farm on the East Coast of the United States. Importantly, Manna Fish Farms is adapting best practices established in other regions of the world where offshore finfish farming is already occurring. This will allow Manna Fish Farms to create an environmentally sustainable and economically viable form of finfish production here in the United States and we are excited to see this model adapted in waters off the shores of Suffolk County. Notably, this project will complement other region-wide and state-wide efforts to cultivate our oceans for renewable food and energy, mirroring efforts to promote sustainable wind energy off of the coast of Montauk.

Manna Fish Farms will feature extensive collaboration between local universities and internationally recognized experts in the field of offshore finfish farming including SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook SOMAS (School of Marine and Atmospheric Science), the University of New Hampshire, the University of Rhode Island, and the University of Miami in collaboration with ocean farm experts Neil Sims, from The Velella Project and Kampachi Farms in Hawaii, and Brian O'Hanlon, Founder of Open Blue cobia farm in Panama. The project is expected to create over 100 jobs within the region while also taking harvesting pressures off local fish stocks and revitalizing local waterfronts.

Amazingly, the United States imports over 91% of the seafood it consumes. Considering the United States has the best managed fisheries and aquaculture establishments in the world, this is both environmentally damaging and economically unsustainable. We need to bring fish production and harvest back to American shores. Fishing and maritime culture is an important component of Long Island heritage and it will play a pivotal role in our continued economic success. We believe the Manna Fish Farms proposal will complement our existing efforts within the region to enhance, protect, and grow our natural resources and preserve local quality of life.

Sincerely,

Steven Bellone
Suffolk County Executive