



July 18th, 2017

To: Kevin Law & Stuart Rabinowitz
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs
c/o Empire State Development, 150 Motor Parkway,
Hauppauge, New York 11788

Reference: Manna Fish Farms, Inc. – Grant #72899

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

I am writing on behalf of the Ocean Stewards Institute to express our strong support for the application submitted by Manna Fish Farms, Inc. for funding through Empire State Development.

Manna Fish Farms will be the first offshore finfish farm on the East Coast of the United States. As a pioneering, innovative venture, in an industry where there is great need for expansion, both locally and globally, they deserve the fullest support of New York State.

Manna Fish Farms is working in collaboration with SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook SoMAS (School of Marine and Atmospheric Science), University of New Hampshire, University of Rhode Island, and University of Miami, and in collaboration with ocean farming experts such as Brian O’Hanlon, Founder of Open Blue cobia farm in Panama (www.openblue.com), and others of the Ocean Stewards Institute.

The Manna Fish Farms project plan is responsible, transparent and environmentally sound. It will boost the local economy, with an estimated 100+ jobs to be added over the next years, while at the same time take pressure off wild fish stocks, and revitalize our working waterfront.

The future of seafood lies in farming: United Nations has projected that we must double our aquaculture production by 2030, in order to maintain our current levels of seafood consumption. The ocean is the natural place for this to occur: deep water, further offshore, in brisk ocean currents means that any potential negative impact on the environment is greatly diminished, or is

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even undetectable. (See NOAA citations in support of this, below¹)

Currently the U.S. imports 91% of seafood consumed, resulting in a \$14 Billion seafood trade deficit. Projects such as Manna Fish Farms can slow or even reverse this trend.

The United States has developed much of the technology for development of offshore aquaculture, but has lagged behind in the execution of this industry. We hope that this project will be the first step in reversing this sorry trend in New York State. .

Thank you, and aloha,



Neil Anthony Sims
Founding President
The Ocean Stewards Institute

P.S. About the Ocean Stewards: The Ocean Stewards Institute is a trade association that provides leadership and reasoned advocacy for the best use and management of our open oceans. The Ocean Stewards assert that increased production of environmentally-sound, healthful, high quality seafood from open ocean waters is an environmental, economic and public health imperative. This opportunity must be balanced by strong protection of the ocean's fragile ecosystems. The Ocean Stewards recognize that we are operating within the public domain, and want to see this industry – and other uses of open ocean waters – develop in a way that meets the expectations of the community and the seafood consumer. The Ocean Stewards are the true revolutionaries of the Blue Revolution. More at www.oceanstewards.org

¹ See Price, C.S., and J.A. Morris, Jr (2013) Marine Cage Culture and the Environment. NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 164. 172 pp. (Available at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2013/pdfs/2013_PriceandMorris_MarineCageCultureandTheEnvironment%285%29.pdf), and

Rust, Michael B., Kevin H. Amos, April L. Bagwill, Walton W. Dickhoff, Lorenzo M. Juarez, Carol S. Price, James A. Morris Jr. & Michael C. Rubino (2014) Environmental Performance of Marine Net-Pen Aquaculture in the United States, Fisheries, 39:11, 508-524, DOI:10.1080/03632415.2014.966818. (Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03632415.2014.966818>)

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